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Dana BĂDULESCU

NOVEL OF SENSUALITY WOMEN IN ROOMS
SONS AND ROVERS THE RAINBOW

D.H. LAWRENCE

ALDOUS HUXLEY

NOVEL OF IDEAS POINT COUNTER POINT
DYSTOPIA BRAVE NEW WORLD

E.M. FORSTER

CONDITION OF ENGLAND HOWARDS END
A PASSAGE TO INDIAN ASPECTS OF THE NOVEL



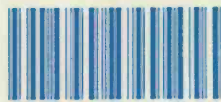
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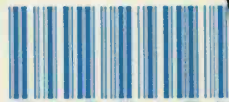
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Dana BĂDULESCU



EARLY 20TH CENTURY BRITISH FICTION

Modernism

Part II

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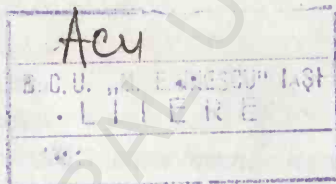
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I. D. H. LAWRENCE'S NOVEL OF SENSIBILITY

"Ours is essentially a tragic age, so we refuse to take it tragically."

D. H. Lawrence, *Lady Chatterley's Lover*

This unit presents D. H. Lawrence's contribution to the modernist English novel in relation to both a forerunner such as Thomas Hardy and to his contemporary fellow writers Virginia Woolf and James Joyce, who opted for apparently more daring techniques of capturing subjectivity in their stream of consciousness experimental novels. Lawrence's rejection of the over-intellectualism of his age made him a fierce opponent of James Joyce, whose sophisticated namby-pamby self-consciousness and "did I feel a twinge in my little toe, or didn't I?" "wooly" style irritated him. The same rejection made Lawrence criticize the artificiality of the Bloomsburies and made a world of difference between his novel of sensibility and Huxley's novel of ideas.

However, despite his belated romanticism, Lawrence was an innovative writer. His innovations concern both subject matter and techniques. In terms of subject matter, his novels are daring, even shocking explorations of sex, and the techniques deployed can be regarded as a version of the subjective novel, a formula also developed by Woolf and Joyce.

Lawrence's taboo breaking topic of sex has to be seen in close connection to the major themes of the battle of the sexes, antagonism and oneness, and also with the deployment of free indirect style/discourse and charged symbolism. All these aspects led Lawrence miles away from the realist novel and came together in his unique formula of the subjective novel.

1. Lawrence and the Novel

"Never trust the artist. Trust the tale."

D. H. Lawrence, *Studies in Classic American Literature*

English novelist, story writer, critic, poet and painter, one of the greatest figures in the 20th century English literature, Lawrence saw sex and intuition as a key to the undistorted perception of reality and a way to respond to the inhumanity of the industrial culture. Lawrence's doctrines of sexual freedom arose obscenity trials, which had a deep effect on the relationship between literature and society.

Lawrence argued that instincts and intuitions are more important than reason. His belief in the importance of instincts reflected the thought of Friedrich Nietzsche, whom Lawrence had already read in the 1910s. His novel *Aaron's Rod* shows directly Nietzsche's influence, and in *Kangaroo* Lawrence expressed his own idea of a 'superman'.

2. Lawrence and the Theory of the Novel

"We judge a work of art by its effect on our sincere and vital emotion, and nothing else. All the critical twiddle-twaddle about style and form, all this pseudo-scientific classifying and analyzing of books in an imitation-botanical fashion, is mere impertinence and mostly dull jargon."

D. H. Lawrence, *Phoenix*

Lawrence expressed his iconoclastic outlook on the novel in essays with suggestive titles like *The Novel*, *Surgery for the Novel – Or a Bomb*, *Morality and the Novel*, *Why the Novel Matters*. He also articulated his views of art and the art of the novel in his letters.

For Lawrence, as for his fellow novelists, language was subversive, and the novel was likewise conceived as a subversive genre aimed at undermining established conventions of realism and at demythologizing more traditional literary forms.

F. R. Leavis, in his *D. H. Lawrence: Novelist*, calls Lawrence "an incompatible critic."¹ This opinion seems to have been embraced by the academic world, and indeed if Lawrence is compared to most of other critics, Leavis's judgement is essentially right. The quotation from *Phoenix*, for instance, expresses Lawrence's strong lifelong conviction that a work of art, and the novel is just that, is something of direct relevance to life, and not merely an interesting lifeless machine which can be taken to pieces for the purposes of study. Perhaps the most commonsensical assessment of Lawrence's position and contribution as a literary and art critic is that in his criticism and theory of the novel he was a creative writer first and a critic second. In other words, he must have felt it necessary to express his views as a critic for two main reasons: in the first place, he wanted his contemporaries to take the novel seriously, and this led him to a fervent plea for the frankness, openness and flexibility with which the genre needed to be approached.

Lawrence responded to his contemporaries' perception and reception of his own novels. For instance, re the psychological analyses of *Sons and Lovers*, he replied:

*"You know I think these 'complexes' are vicious half-statements of the Freudians: sort of can't see wood for trees. When you've said Mutter-complex, you've said nothing – no more than if you called hysteria a nervous disease. Hysteria isn't nerves, a complex is not simply a sex-relation: far from it. – My poor book: it was, as art, a fairly complete truth: so they carve a half lie out of it, and say 'Voilà'. Swine!"*²

It seems that Lawrence was not objecting to the specifically Freudian interpretation of *Sons and Lovers*, but rather to the psychoanalytic critics' failure to preserve the distinction between psychology and art. His point here is that the psychologist reduces the work of art to something less than itself. Lawrence did not deny that he suffered from a 'mother-complex', but he asserted that the naked truth about it could be told in all honesty in a work of art. To Lawrence, the complex

is far more than a scientifically observable phenomenon; it is an experience which art can reflect with honesty and sincerity. The same honesty should guide the critics' approaches, and this makes the difference between science and its jargon, on the one hand, and art, art criticism and its language, on the other.

In "D. H. Lawrence and the Ethical Approach to Literary Criticism", Donald A. Dyson argues that "in order to go beyond Lawrence, it is necessary to discover the nature of the relationship between art and the imperfect human condition from which it arises."³ To Lawrence, "an artist is never, in being an artist, an idealist. The artist lives and sees and knows direct from the life-mystery itself. He sees the creative uncompassable mystery in all its nakedness of impulse and gesture."⁴ The life mystery is an absolute which art seeks to embody, and art's aimed effect is to put the reader/viewer/listener in contact with it. By contrast, Lawrence implies, the idealist has no contact with the life-mystery, but rather thinks only in ideas, which are merely his own sterile creations. Lawrence deplored the over-intellectualism of his own age, considering it one of the sources of sterility. He believed, beyond any shadow of doubt, that ideas are relative, while the life-mystery is a universal absolute.

Lawrence's criticism is also an illustration of the revolutionary changes in the intellectual climate of the early 20th century. The dominant theories at that time were surely authored by Darwin, Marx and Freud, and their common denominator was relativisation. What these three theorists did in their respective fields was mainly to destroy the idea of an independent intellect. They made it very clear that the intellect depended on the activities of the unconscious mind, on its opposition in history and society, on various animal instincts and drives, and so forth.

This relativism underpins Woolf's statements in "Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Brown". The same relativism made it possible, almost compulsory, to see Shakespeare not as the divinely-inspired bard, but as an Elizabethan bourgeois driven by the Oedipus complex. The absolute of truth became meaningless, and was replaced by 'little' absolutes derived from the governing parts of man's nature, by the absolute of psychic health or of social harmony. The main shift was that an intellectual and aesthetic absolute was replaced by non-intellectual absolutes, which did not apply to works of art.

This changing of absolutes occurred in the works of Nietzsche, whose ideas deeply influenced Lawrence. In *Beyond Good and Evil*, Nietzsche argued that:

*"being conscious is in no decisive sense the opposite of the instinctive – most of a philosopher's conscious thinking is secretly directed and compelled into definite channels by his instincts...The falseness of a judgement is to us not necessarily an objection to a judgement: it is here that our new language perhaps sounds strangest. The question is to what extent it is life-advancing, life-preserving, species-preserving, perhaps even species-breeding..."*⁵

This passage sheds light on the unspoken allegations in Lawrence's criticism. Nietzsche's philosopher is Lawrence's artist, and what he puts forward as true is actually the product of his instincts. Therefore, it is meaningless to call that

product true or false, or otherwise. The test of truth is its usefulness to life. Donald A. Dyson calls this passage "a piece of biological thinking applied to philosophy" and notices that it "is full of the language of biology, and it is quite obvious that ideas are being equated with chance variations within a species, and are being seen as weapons in the fight for the survival of the fittest."⁶

Woolf saw the year 1910 as a turning point. She knew she could not be exact, and indeed one may push the date back to 1905, the year of Forster's *Where Angels Fear to Tread*, or ahead to 1915, the year when Lawrence's *The Rainbow* was published. Nevertheless it seems that the essence of change is fully concentrated there. For Woolf, the revelation of change lay in the first London exhibition of Post-Impressionist paintings, which opened on November 8, 1910. Here, in the Cézannes and Manets, the Gauguins and Picassos, Van Goghs and Signacs, **a new art was announced**, and a new human character that went with it. That art was restless, subjective, erotic, coloured. It changed the lines of things, the light, the volumes; it infused, as Woolf herself was to do in her fiction, an aesthetic ebullience into the particles of the world. It was an art not of selfless mimesis but **of immediate and carnal intuition**. Of course, Woolf recognized it instantaneously and heralded this revolution in human character, but she did not quite render its pulse; in her writings its rhythm was slack. As Bedient Calvin remarks, "almost entirely given over to intuition as Virginia Woolf was, her footing in instinct was yet insecure. An almost unworldly fragility is her note. The ruling impulse of her work is not an assent to life but a desperate defense against it. Life seems to hit her, always, with the force of a wind that, even as she runs to meet it, takes away her breath."⁷

Lawrence's is, by contrast, **a Nietzschean Self**. He declared that "one's got to get back to the live, really lively phallic self." In Lawrence's fiction, and in the Nietzschean view behind it, one finds the new tone, the new conscience in all its fervour. Indeed, of all the Continental philosophers who prepared England for the revolution it needed to effect, **Nietzsche was the arsenal, the fuse, of the modern revolution of values**. To the Victorian "sincerity" of the heart, Nietzsche opposed a total and remorseless psychological sincerity, an aggressive honesty of the depths.

In this Nietzschean spirit, **Lawrence saw the natural as the ideal**. The erotic fusion of mind and senses, the coincidence of self-delighting will and destiny is precisely what Lawrence, never daunted after *Sons and Lovers*, took to be the clue, the justification of his world. Individual unity is thus in Lawrence's works a germinating intimacy with the world.

Bakhtin's idea of **carnival**⁸ is particularly applicable to Lawrence's genre theory in ways that distinguish his criticism from that of other novelists writing at the same time. For Bakhtin, carnival is a system of rhetorical discourse employed to challenge, entirely on the level of text, established conventions of genre. Carnival functions to **undermine the language of literary authority** and, in its place, effect a new order of genre. There are basically four categories of carnival, which correspond to Lawrence's approach to the novel. Thus Lawrence's informality and

accessibility of critical style corresponds to the carnival's institutionalizing of free and familiar contact between people. Lawrence's iconoclastic approach to his theory of the genre corresponds to the collapsing of hierarchical distinctions effected by the carnival. The legitimizing of carnivalesque blasphemies is a feature of Lawrence's theory and practice of the novel. The privileging of carnivalesque eccentricity is also a strong characteristic of Lawrence's approach to life and to the novel.

TAKE AWAY

Before you move on to section I.3, consider the following questions:

- a) what is a work of art in Lawrence's view?
- b) what is the relevance of Friedrich Nietzsche's philosophy to Lawrence's critical and theoretical approach?
- c) what is the relevance of Bakhtin's concept of carnival to Lawrence's approach to the novel?
- d) what is Lawrence's contribution to the theory of the novel?

3. Lawrence and Painting – A Modern Blake?

"Vision became more optical, less intuitive...look at England! Hogarth, Reynolds, Gainsborough, they are all already bourgeois. The coat is really more important than the man. It is amazing how important clothes suddenly become, how they cover the subject..."

D. H. Lawrence, *Introduction to These Paintings*

Even if Lawrence the writer stirs contradictory reactions ranging between irritation and adulation, but is none the less regarded as a great writer of considerable influence, Lawrence the painter has a much less unequivocal status. There was something logical, inevitable, about his deciding, late in his short life, to add visual art to the way in which he campaigned for a fuller, more reverent sense of bodily existence.

Lawrence was a writer who expounded a vision, and a vision implies the visual. From William Blake⁹ to Alasdair Gray¹⁰, writers who have a burning image in their minds have sought to share it, not just in words, but in pictures.

Blake was Lawrence's model as an artist-writer. He made copies of Blake's works and called him "the exception" in Britain's depressingly bereft art history, "the only painter of imaginative pictures, apart from landscape, that England has produced." [See Plates 1 to 4]

Lawrence might have been a modern Blake, but he always dabbled in the visual art until late in the 1920s. As he tried to get *Lady Chatterley's Lover* published, he started to make paintings with an argument.

Lawrence painted erotic visions with a reverence for the naked body and extensive quotations of **the physically explicit art of Renaissance Italy**. His “Boccaccio Story” and “Leda and the Swan” draw on the Italian Renaissance spirit. However, Lawrence’s bodies (especially those of women) look slightly deformed.

Lawrence was a lot happier painting men nude than women. His most successful pictures are of men. Best of all is *Dandelions*, a painting of a naked man pissing, which reminds us that the most memorable erotic moment in Lawrence’s fiction is when Rupert and Gerald wrestle in the “Gladiatorial” chapter of *Women in Love*. [See Annex I] Lawrence’s English contemporaries, whose judgements and propriety standards were still belatedly Victorian, were scandalized by the expatriate author’s paintings exhibited at the Warren Gallery in London. The deal Lawrence struck with them was that his paintings - which had been seized and held in a cell - were to be returned to him on condition that they never again be shown in Britain.

In his essay *Introduction to these Paintings*, Lawrence looked into an aspect that had made him stand against the British stiffness. He started from the accurate observation that “the English produce so few pictures” in comparison with France, Italy and Germany. Lawrence put this gap in the English arts down to “the English attitude to life”, which is “paralysed by fear”. Lawrence argued that this is fear of consequences, and most of all, the consequences of sex. Hamlet is crippled by sexual dread of Ophelia, panic over syphilis fed the terrors of English Puritanism, and this legacy of fear had benighted English art.

Lawrence also found his present too coldly intellectual, and made a point of the timidly unsensual way in which the British appropriated modernism. Thus Lawrence’s essay develops into a critique of the Bloomsbury critic Roger Fry’s book *Cézanne: A Study of Development*, in which Cézanne is praised as an artist of “significant form”.

It seems that Lawrence exhibited his own paintings to prove something rather than change anything. When the British establishment reacted as he knew they would, Lawrence had the final and undeniable evidence that he was right: the British disgust for the physical was so extreme that a male nude performing a natural gesture would shake society to its foundations.

As a matter of fact, Lawrence was more of his European moment than he realized, as an artist and especially as an art critic. In the 1920s, French and Spanish artists focused on the body, mocking the highbrow good taste with which critics such as Fry, and their French equivalents, had veiled modern art.

The kitsch aspects of Lawrence’s pictures may be deliberate too. Like Cézanne, he admired Renoir. Renioresque kitsch adding to his confessional honesty. [See Plates 5 and 6]

TAKE AWAY

Before you move on to section I.4, consider the following questions:

- a) what artists and art trends influenced Lawrence the painter?
- b) why did Lawrence take on painting?
- c) what arguments did Lawrence make in "Introduction to These Paintings"?
- d) how can you correlate Lawrence's painting with his writing? (see also the following sections)

4. Why Novel of Sensibility ?

D. H. Lawrence has been ranked among the most influential and controversial writers of the 20th century. In his more than 40 books he celebrated his vision of the natural, whole human being, thus opposing the artificiality of modern industrial society with its dehumanization of life and love.

However, Lawrence's novels, and then his paintings, came as a shock to his contemporaries, who misunderstood, attacked, and even suppressed them because of their frank treatment of sexual matters.

D. H. Lawrence expressed an acute sense of his need for a return from the confusion, over-intellectualism and cold materialism of modern life to the primitive, unconscious springs of vitality of the race. Indeed, it can be argued that Lawrence was an essentially pagan spirit that valued what pre-Christian (especially old Anglo-Saxon) cultures had offered humanity in terms of unspoiled vitality and passion.

This strong urge to go back to the old pagan roots of the race placed him in a line opened by the late Victorian novelist **Thomas Hardy**. Lawrence saw Hardy as his chief forerunner in trying to transpose tragedy from drama to fiction. He described the subject of Hardy's novels as *"the tragedy of those who, more or less pioneers, have died in the wilderness whither they had escaped for free action, after having left the walled security, and the comparative imprisonment, of the established convention"*.

Lawrence's own contribution to the English novel is the breaking of established conventions. His numerous novels and short stories, among which some of the best known are *Sons and Lovers* (1913), *The Rainbow* (1915), *Women in Love* (1921), *The Plumed Serpent* (1926), *Lady Chatterley's Lover* (1928) are for most part and to a large extent experimental, though not so daringly innovative from a technical point of view as Woolf's or Joyce's. The obvious symbolism of Lawrence's plots and the forceful straightforward preaching of his message broke the bonds of realism.

Lawrence has unanimously been regarded as a late romantic spirit, endowed with heaps of vitality and sensitivity, which urged him to articulate a freer, more natural, and more direct expression of the writer's perceptions. As a matter of fact, he transmitted this vitality to his characters, whom he allowed the same freedom of unrestrained and unconventional expression. For all these reasons his novels are known as **novels of sensibility**.

5. Taboo Breaking

Taboo is related to **prohibition**. The term can be defined as "*a prohibition or rejection of particular types of behaviour or language because they are considered socially unacceptable*".

Lawrence, the son of a coal miner, born and brought up in the small mining village of Eastwood, Nottinghamshire, contributed to English culture and literature from a marginalized social and cultural position, which gave him the go-ahead to challenge the **establishment**.

Therefore, Lawrence's standpoint as a writer was to challenge, shake and eventually break the taboos imposed by the establishment. The taboo that mattered most to Lawrence was **sex**. In his essay *Sex, Creativity and Biography: The Young D. H. Lawrence*, David Lodge states that "*in no modern writer are sexuality and creativity more deeply and intricately connected than in D. H. Lawrence*."¹¹

However, besides creativity and sex, there is **class**. The issue of class incompatibility gave rise to another taboo breaking theme running through Lawrence's fiction: **classlessness**. Lawrence liked to give the impression that while his father was working-class, his mother was middle-class. This alleged class clash in his own family led Lawrence to what he saw as an **ideal of classlessness**, which also animated his characters in an ardent desire to be both sexually and socially free.

Lawrence made a strong point of this ideal freedom in "**Derelict**", the last chapter of his novel *Sons and Lovers*. This sense of freedom may feel like devastating pain because **the character is left "naked of everything"**. In the closing lines of the novel Paul Morel, a painter and also the key figure feels that:

"The town, as he sat upon the car, stretched away, over the bay of railway, a level fume of lights. Beyond the town the country, little smouldering spots for more towns – the sea – the night – on and on! And he had no place in it. Whatever spot he stood on, there he stood alone. /.../ The people hurrying along the streets offered no obstruction to the void in which he found himself. They were small shadows whose footsteps and voices could be heard, but in each of them, the same night, the same silence. /.../ There was no Time, only Space. /.../ Night, in which everything was lost, went reaching out, beyond stars and sun. Stars and sun, a few bright grains, went spinning round for terror and holding each other in embrace, there in a darkness that outpassed them all and left them tiny and daunted. So much, and himself, infinitesimal, at the core a nothingness, and yet not nothing."
(SAL, pp. 463-464)

Sons and Lovers ends with Paul a derelict in the "drift toward death", which Lawrence thought of in more general terms as the disease syndrome of his time and of the Europe of his time. The death drift and death worship are for Lawrence hideous distortions of the natural relationship of death to life. The whole passage is dominated by the dramatic tension between light and darkness, which is symbolic of the tension between life and death internalized by Paul. Eventually Paul decides to head towards the lights of the city, overcoming his "death drift". It is very significant that he does it from this position of a person who is now, at the end and in the end, free of and from everything and everybody: he has no religion, no class to fit in, no family, no ties, no country, no prejudices and no firm holds. This "nakedness of everything" and this homelessness are symbolic of the character's freedom from all conventions and constrictions, which can no longer affect him. Paul's mood and final decision imply that he has transgressed all conventions and norms, breaking all the taboos imposed by the system.

In his two essays *Psychoanalysis and the Unconscious* and *Fantasia of the Unconscious*, Lawrence responded to the psychoanalytic criticism of his novel *Sons and Lovers*. The essays progressed into a counterpoint to the Freudian psychoanalytic theory of the unconscious and the incest motive. These essays articulate Lawrence's conceptions of education, marriage, and social and political action, along with insights into the struggle to rationalize and reconcile the polarity between emotional and intellectual identities. Critical to understanding the author's other works, these essays offer a bold taboo-breaking synthesis of literary criticism of Freudian psychology.

TAKE AWAY

Before you move on to section I.6, consider the following questions:

- why is taboo-breaking an essential aspect of Lawrence's art?
- what were the main taboos challenged by Lawrence?
- why is the ending of *Sons and Lovers* an epitome of taboo-breaking?

6. Free Indirect Style

In his greatest novels *The Rainbow* and *Women in Love* Lawrence increasingly turned away from the diminished possibilities of the wider world, which had provided the realists with its material, to examine the potential of fulfillment through personal relationships.

Envisaging sex as an integral and essential part of such relationships, Lawrence presented his characters' sexuality with a frankness, urgency and explicitness that was largely new to the novel. No wonder that his contemporary

readers, used to the notions of propriety imposed by the establishment, found Lawrence's treatment of sex shocking! The readers' reaction led Lawrence, like Joyce, into trouble with censorship.¹²

In terms of plot and narrative structure, Lawrence's novels may seem conventional. What makes them look disturbingly unconventional is Lawrence's choice of subject matter. However, this impression fails to do justice to Lawrence's technical and stylistic innovations.

It can be argued that if sex is an essentially intimate matter, Lawrence's manner of handling it also suggests a plunge into the characters' intimacy. Thus, there are critics ready to acknowledge that Lawrence's style is as innovative as his subject matter. Randall Stevenson states that "*the intensity of Lawrence's interest in 'the psychology of the free human individual', and in the effect upon his characters of the ebb and flow, wonder and disillusion of powerful emotions released in their relationships, also led him to develop new fictional styles for presenting subjectivity.*"¹³

Indeed, Lawrence developed a strategy of directing his readers' attention upon individual consciousness and a style that went with it. This may be seen, for instance, in the following passage from *The Rainbow*, which traces the thoughts of Lawrence's heroine Ursula Brangwen as she walks out one spring morning:

"Again she felt Jesus in the countryside. Ah, he would lift up the lambs in his arms! Ah, and she was the lamb. Again, in the morning, going down the lane, she heard the ewe call, and the lambs came running... stooping, nuzzling, groping to the udder... Oh and the bliss, the bliss! She could scarcely tear herself away to go to school." (TR, p. 287)

It is clear that the voice which says 'ah' and 'Oh... the bliss!' is not wholly Lawrence's or the narrator's own, but really a partial transcription of Ursula's, though this is not conventionally marked for the reader by such phrases as 'she said' or 'she thought'. What these very intimate thoughts and feelings suggest is that Ursula is a highly sensitive person. She craves for purity, which she sees everywhere around her in nature. The problem is that this craving is too intimate and too unconventional to be communicated aloud to a world governed by conventions. The passage makes this very clear in the last line, which sets the contrast between the genuineness of Ursula's unconventional nature and the obligations imposed by social conventions: "*She could scarcely tear herself away to go to school.*"

Actual experiences and dialogues in Lawrence's novels are often followed by several paragraphs or even pages focusing upon a minute examination of his characters' reflections and emotions (as in the passage above). The intimacy, depth and intensity with which Lawrence sought to present this inner experience often led him to a distinctive intermingling of characters' inner voices with his own more objective authorial tone.

This technique of presenting a character's thoughts, feelings, emotions articulated in words that are never uttered aloud and partly mediated through the

voice of the author is called “free indirect style or discourse”. This technique is not Lawrence’s discovery, but it certainly was so largely used by him that it became a mark of his style. Randall Stevenson argued that a free indirect style “is a distinctive extension of the novelist’s means of ‘looking within’ and examining the mind.”

Although Lawrence refrained himself from employing more direct entries into the mental experience of his characters offered by stream of consciousness, his formula of free indirect discourse clearly associates him with modernist writers such as Woolf and Joyce.

TAKE AWAY

Before you move on to section I.7, consider the following questions:

- what is free indirect style/discourse?
- why is free indirect style/discourse a version of the subjective novel?
- read the following passage from *Women in Love*:

“Well, if mankind is destroyed, if our race is destroyed like Sodom, and there is this beautiful evening with the luminous land and trees, I am satisfied. That which informs it all is there, and can never be lost. After all, what is mankind but just one expression of the incomprehensible. And if mankind passes away, it will only mean that this particular expression is completed and done. That which is expressed, and that which is to be expressed, cannot be diminished. There it is, in the shining evening. Let mankind pass away – time it did. The creative utterances will not cease, they will only be there. Humanity doesn’t embody the utterance of the incomprehensible any more. Humanity is a dead letter. There will be a new embodiment, in a new way. Let humanity disappear as quick as possible.” (WIL, p. 65)

The passage renders the thoughts of Rupert Birkin, one of the main characters in the novel. It is preceded by “Birkin looked at the land, at the evening, and was thinking.” Such indications make it very clear that the reader is granted access to the character’s thoughts. Compare it to the passage from *The Rainbow* treated as free indirect style in this section. Both passages are illustrative of the subjective novel and of Lawrence’s interest in his characters’ most intimate thoughts. What do you think prevents them from sharing them?

7. Antagonism and Oneness in *The Rainbow*

With Lydia and Tom Brangwen, the parental couple in *The Rainbow*, the antagonism of the sexes unfolds a story that – through its fierce re-enactment in the couple of Anna and Will Brangwen – reaches the New Woman Ursula.

With Lydia and Tom, the inevitable antagonism is tempered and eventually toned down – to become a relatively “happy” marriage – by Lydia’s *foreignness*. Her foreignness has very large and ambivalent connotations in the novel. Lydia’s rather mysterious Polishness both *attracts* and *repels* Tom. It attracts him as a *sign* of complementariness, and it repels him as a *sign* of cultural, sexual and even class incongruity. However, the couple Lydia and Tom Brangwen manages to achieve a relative equilibrium that supports Lawrence’s *motif of oneness*:

“They did not take much notice of each other, consciously.

‘I’m betimes,’ he said.

‘Yes,’ she answered.

He turned to the dogs, or to the child if she were there. The little Anna played about the farm, flitting constantly in to call something to her mother, to fling her arms round her mother’s skirts, to be noticed, perhaps caressed, then, forgetting, to slip out again.

Then Brangewen, talking to the child, or to the dog between his knees, would be aware of his wife, as, in her tight, dark bodice and her lace fichu, she was reaching up to the corner cupboard. He realized that he lived by her. Did he own her? Was she here for ever? Or might she go away? She was not really his, it was not a real marriage, this marriage between them. She might go away. He did not feel like a master, husband, father of her children. She belonged elsewhere. Any moment, she might be gone. And he was ever drawn to her, drawn after her, with ever-raging, ever-unsatisfied desire. He must always turn home, wherever his steps were taking him, always to her, and he could never quite reach her, he could never quite be satisfied, never be at peace, because she might go away.”

Tom Brangwen’s apprehensions are not, after all, just the timeless worries of husbands but unprecedented seismic shocks brought about by the “modernization” of his world. Throughout his life, from all points of view, Tom is forced to live with the radical changes of modernity brought about by the pressures of industrialization upon the natural life on the farm. Thomas Hardy had thematized this devastating effect of an increasingly mechanized society upon the individual before Lawrence. Lawrence was born later only to see that those effects were turning the farmers’ life into hell (Tom’s restlessness is a translation of hell).

The point Lawrence made is that these changes also affect the life of the couple. Husbands feel marriage turn into a relationship on the edge, dominated by contradictory feelings of attraction and repulsion. Tom feels it to be so and relates it to the fact that nature is less and less part of the couple’s life. That is why he constantly looks for comfort by talking *“to the child, or to the dog between his knees”* (unspoiled creatures). However, pressures never release him. He feels the

pressures of antagonism in his wife's foreignness, which represents the distance between all people and especially between the sexes. Tom's apprehensions are, in other words, that distance and foreignness may grow so sharp as to become unbridgeable antagonism, radical estrangement and irrecoverable separation: "*She belonged elsewhere. Any moment, she might be gone.*"

Anna Brangwen, Lydia's daughter by her (now dead) Polish husband, replays this antagonistic game with her husband Will. The point is that the game becomes more and more dangerous since **old rules of mastership can no longer apply to the modern couple**. Like Gertrude, the mother in *Sons and Lovers*, like Winifred in the short story "England, My England", Anna imposes her power and domination after a "battle". Will's problem is that he runs "*after his dark-souled desires*" and does the most foolish thing: he claims "*the old position of master of the house*".

To many readers and critics **Anna and Will epitomize the first modern couple**. They seem to lose all ties with nature and tradition that Tom and Lydia (the first couple in the book) still managed to preserve. The tensions in this couple become so fierce that no equilibrium can eventually be restored. In their couple antagonism prevails. The man, having lost his inherited mastery, comes to depend on satisfactions of sexuality as on a drug, while the woman comes to resent what she will eventually regard as his infantile male weakness. Anna and Will can never reclaim their honeymoon fulfillment of passion, nor can they reconcile passion and sensuality. [See Annex 3] So their lives dwindle away in disorganization and in minor consummations and complaints. Anna calls Will a fool, while she is his fierce opponent in the name of a newly gained womanly power, which is a consequence of his loss of inherited manly mastery.

Eventually victory is on Anna's side because she is the embodiment of feminine fertility. She embarks on an apparently ceaseless child-bearing mission in which she revels with an unstoppable joy. However, with Anna we still have to do with a feminine "power" of a very old matriarchal order. So Lawrence's novel urges the readers on to her daughter Ursula.

The daughter, Ursula, who inherits her father's "darkness" and her mother's strength, is Lawrence's *New Woman*. Her antagonistic attitude to the opposite sex, which makes her relationship with Anton so sexually intense and yet so impossible, is no longer accountable on social or cultural background incompatibility. It is now a matter of Ursula, the *New Woman*, being aware of her new femininity. Ursula asserts her economic independence when she takes a teaching job in "*the men's world*". Then she manages to make her way through it by adopting typically masculine belligerent methods of herding the pupils into a soulless mechanical system. With a half-sense of failure and half-sense of success, she goes to a further education college, which bitterly disappoints her again.

The relationship with Anton Skrebensky, which she feels as "*a truce*" concluded by two "*enemies*" in "The Bitterness of Ecstasy" chapter, proves to be an utter failure. The failure is grounded in **the difference between the male's view and**

commitments on the one the hand, and *the female's view and commitments, on the other*, which sum up Ursula and Anton's **antagonistic souls**. It is precisely in the light of Ursula's New Woman standpoint that we are supposed to make sense of her intriguing anti-democratic convictions, articulated with so much force, bitterness and passion in "The Bitterness of Ecstasy":

"I shall be glad to leave England. Everything is so meagre and paltry, it is so unspiritual – I hate democracy." /.../

/.../ It was as if she were attacking him.

"What do you mean?" he asked her, hostile. "Why do you hate democracy?"

"/.../ Only degenerate races are democratic."

"What do you want then – an aristocracy?" /.../

"I do want an aristocracy." She cried. "And I'd far rather have an aristocracy of birth than of money. Who are the aristocrats now – who are chosen as the best to rule? Those who have money and the brains for money. It doesn't matter what else they have; but they must have money-brains, because they are ruling in the name of money". (TR, pp. 460-461)

This fiery attack engenders an approach to *the crisis of the age*, which had its roots (as Woolf pointed out in her essays and also implied in her novels) in **Victorian phallocentrism**¹⁵ and Edwardian "**materialism**". The markedly feminine note brought about in the English fiction of the early 20th century by Woolf is struck here by Lawrence's character Ursula. It is not that Anton would not be an aristocrat. We are reminded in the same passage that "*he always felt that by rights he belonged to the ruling aristocracy*". The fact is that he is nonetheless committed to *the system* attacked so vehemently by Ursula. He is committed to "*the equality of dirt*", that is *money* and moreover to *Rule Britannia* (the British Empire and its domination). It is this **patriarchal imperial domination and arrogance** that Ursula so irrevocably rejects, flinging her embittered disapproval of it in Anton's stunned face.

Anton will leave for India to marry there, while Ursula will remain in England to build a spiritual rainbow, "*the earth's new architecture, the old, brittle corruption of houses and factories swept away, the world built up in a living fabric of Truth, fitting to the over-arching heaven.*" Accustomed to so many antagonistic couples who eventually concluded a "truce" of lasting marriage, the reader finds something *radical* in the conflict between Ursula and Anton, an antagonism which can by no means be solved by a "truce". It is *Ursula-the New Woman* that makes the antagonism so unbridgeable by marriage. The bridge promised by the title is **the image-symbol of the rainbow that concludes the novel transcendently**: it *unites* the generations in the novel and elsewhere, and it mystically *unites* the earth (society, culture and civilization, so broken and fragmented by a sense of crisis, tension, changes and shifts) with heaven; it also *unites body and spirit*, "*arched*" as it is "*in their blood*" and "*quivering to life.*" [See Annex 2]

TAKE AWAY

Before you move on to section I.8, consider the following questions:

- a) why is the antagonism and oneness motif essential in *The Rainbow*?
- b) what vital connection holds Tom and Lydia together?
- c) how is this connection jeopardized in the relationship between Anna and Will?
- d) why are Anna and Will considered the first modern couple?
- e) why is antagonism so fierce in the relationship between Ursula and Anton?

8. Symbolism in *The Rainbow*

Lawrence's use of a very rich texture of symbols is another aspect which compensates for what the modernist novel loses in terms of realist conventions. Thus in his treatment of the degradation of relationships in the modern couple from Lydia and Tom through Anna and Will to Ursula and Anton in *The Rainbow*, Lawrence deployed a tone and imagery that compels the readers to find analogies to the **Biblical Fall**. Lawrence's point in focusing upon this symbolism of the Fall implies that this is the course taken by humanity since the moment when the first couple was forced to depart from the Garden of Eden. This course is one of repeated falls, each new fall worsening the situation and deepening the antagonism. However, Lawrence also made a point of the couple's longing for the lost unity with a highly dramatic force, often touching pathetic and even prophetic notes.

For Anna and Will, their honeymoon feels blissful as the couple rejoices on their sense of oneness:

"As they lay close together, complete and beyond the touch of time or change, it was as if they were at the very centre of all the slow wheeling of space and the rapid agitation of life, deep, deep inside them all, at the centre where there is utter radiance, and eternal being, and the silence absorbed in praise: the steady core of all movements, the unawakened sleep of all wakefulness. They found themselves there, and they lay still, in each other's arms; for their moment they were at the heart of eternity, whilst time roared far off, forever far off, towards the rim.

Then gradually they were passed away from the supreme centre, down the circles of praise and joy and gladness, further and further out, towards the noise and the friction. But their hearts had burned and were tempered by the inner reality, they were unalterably glad."

In this passage, Anna and Will are "complete and beyond the touch of time or change", which is a state perfection beyond time and space. Indeed, they look as if they were the first couple. To them this moment feels like eternity, a

timelessness enjoyed by Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. However, the subsequent passages plunge them "gradually" into time, change, exterior space and friction. [See Annex 3]

It is worth noticing that Lawrence's antagonistic couples find themselves drawn (and sometimes ironically and symbolically drowned) in floods with mythological implications, like Tom in *The Rainbow*, into a dangerous war of the sexes.

Tom Brangwen finds himself tugged between a strong desire to be satisfied and an equally strong sense that he will always be dissatisfied. The war is waged within himself in the first place, and this is agony. Of course, this split, which always feels like devastating pain, is also a condition of the fallen nature of man. Tom dies, drunk as Noah¹⁶ to forget the wearying puzzles of his middle age, drowned in the flood of rain, and his women mourn for him:

"They cleared and washed the body, and laid it on the bed.

There, it looked still and grand. He was perfectly calm in death, and, now he was laid in line, inviolable, unapproachable. To Anna, he was the majesty of the inaccessible male, the majesty of death. It made her still and awe-stricken, almost glad.

Lydia Brangwen, the mother, also came and saw the impressive, inviolable body of the dead man. She went pale, seeing death. He was beyond change or knowledge, absolute, laid in line with the infinite. What had she to do with him? He was a majestic Abstraction, made visible now for a moment, inviolate, absolute. And who could lay claim to him, who could speak of him, of the him who was revealed in the stripped moment of transit from life into death? Neither the living nor the dead could claim him, he was both the one and the other, inviolable, inaccessiblely himself."

In these passages, Tom Brangwen is essentially an **archetype**: in death he is no longer the turn of the century-early 20th century troubled man, but Everyman, not at all the conventional individualist hero of English fiction. In death he has reached a state of beyondness. He has transcended his own physicality and all the torments that go with it.

Tom is the **patriarch, paterfamilias** of the novel, like Noah. The generations that follow Tom: Anna (his daughter), Will (Anna's husband and Tom's nephew), and Ursula (Tom's granddaughter) have their origin in him. Dying in the Flood, he gives them the chance to people the earth after his death. This, and also the fact that he has transcended sufferance, must be what makes Anna "almost glad".

TAKE AWAY

Before you move on to section I.9, consider the following questions:

- what is the relevance of the Biblical Fall to Lawrence's treatment of relations in the couple?
- why is Tom Brangwen a "Noah"?
- the rainbow is also a biblical symbol. In the *Book of Genesis* God says:

"This is the token of the covenant which I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for perpetual generations:

I do set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a token of a covenant between me and the earth.

And it shall come to pass, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the bow shall be seen in the cloud:

And I will remember my covenant, which is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh; and the waters shall no more become a flood to destroy all flesh.

And the bow shall be in the cloud; and I will look upon it, that I may remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is upon the earth.

And God said unto Noah, This is the token of the covenant, which I have established between me and all flesh that is upon the earth."

How can you relate this passage in the Bible to Lawrence's novel, and especially to Ursula's vision at the end of it (see also Annex 2)?

9. *Women in Love*, *The Rainbow's* Sequel

"This book is a potential sequel to The Rainbow.

In England, I would never try to justify myself against any accusation. But to the Americans, perhaps I may speak for myself. I am accused, in England, of uncleanness and pornography. I deny the charge, and take no further notice.

In America the chief accusation seems to be one of "Eroticism." This is odd, rather puzzling to my mind. Which Eros? Eros of the jaunty "amours", or Eros of the sacred mysteries? And if the latter, why accuse, why not respect, even venerate?"

D. H. Lawrence, *Foreword to the American Edition of Women in Love*

In the same foreword, Lawrence explains that *Women in Love* "is a novel which took its final shape in the midst of the period of war, though it does not

concern the war itself. I should wish the time to remain unfixed, so that the bitterness of the war may be taken for granted in the characters."

Lawrence implies that this bitterness is not a taste that goes away so easily: it is a modern taste and mood caused by the most atrocious experience in history ever, and the novel that bears its scars is an **epitome of the modern**.

Lawrence's own sense that "there is now no smooth road into the future" marks the **disjuncture** that underlies the differences between *The Rainbow* and *Women in Love*, which Lawrence originally intended as parts of one long novel, *The Sisters*.

In her essay on *Women in Love*, Joyce Carol Oates argues that the novel's title is inadequate, since "the novel concerns itself with far more than simply women in love; far more than simply women in love."¹⁷ The sense of timelessness in Lawrence's novel is also given by **the mythologically charged tragic figures of the characters**. They seem unable to alter their fates, like tragic heroes and heroines of the old days. The mark of Cain has been on Gerald Crich since early childhood, when he accidentally killed his brother. To Gudrun, he looks like a Nibelung¹⁸ when he dives into the water, or like "the young Hermes"¹⁹ when he steps into her room with an "almost godlike air of simplicity and naïve directness", while Gudrun is named for a heroine out of Germanic legend who slew her first husband. As Oates observes, "the pace of the novel is often frenetic", as if it were rushing towards doom, "time is running out, history is coming to an end, the Apocalypse is at hand."

In his treatment of the two couples in the novel, Lawrence is a priest and preacher of love as the only possible salvation for the 20th century individual. **Love is, to Lawrence and to his character Rupert Birkin, a sacrificial rite, an ancient necessity**. Rupert preaches it in "Mino" (Chapter XIII) [See Annex 4] The two couples are in fact an interesting constellation of four elements in which blood relationship needs to be the vital connection: the two sisters, Ursula and Gudrun are connected through the tie of blood, while Birkin dreams of a Bruderschaft²⁰ with Gerald. The failure of the Bruderschaft leaves Birkin rather imbalanced, unfulfilled in his need for an "eternal union with a man" in the end.

Women in Love is a novel about an incongruous tense world desperately looking for a state of grace and a lost unity. Thus Rupert looks for "a strange conjunction" with Ursula that might take them to "a pure balance of two single beings – as stars balance each other" and also for a union with Gerald, but the novel ends rather bitterly with his and Ursula's quarrelling over his sense of bereavement caused by Gerald's death.

In its very movement and treatment of characters, **the novel epitomizes the tragically split nature of modernity itself**. In some places *Women in Love* is fairly conventional, in others it sounds like a poem [See Annex 5], while in its succession of scenes from "Sisters" (the first), changing indoor and outdoor settings, to the very last "Exeunt", it reads like a play, rushing towards the end in insecurity. If Paul Morel of *Sons and Lovers* was tattered in halves and left in the

end "naked of everything", freed at last, Rupert Birkin of *Women in Love* is a rather mysterious man of a bizarre nature, the embodiment of Lawrence's impatient search beyond the stable ego of character. He is sometimes a prophetic figure, and sometimes merely garrulous and silly. Ursula is no less shift: sometimes she is a mesmerizing archetypal female, and some other times irritatingly possessive and obtuse. Gerald Crich, whom Lawrence mainly intended to make a point of the doom that lies in store for "the industrial magnate", has his moments of splendid charm or touching humanity. Gudrun takes on in her dangerous love game with Gerald the destructive role of the archetypal *Magna Mater*²¹ or the devouring female, and she attains an almost mystic power over him. [See Annex 8] However, towards the end she loses all her mystic aura and becomes merely a vulgar cynical woman.

Women in Love is a novel that expresses Lawrence's view and vision of the **doom of civilization**. Of course, the atrocities of the war contributed to this prophetic **eschatological**²² approach. Eschatology is related to Lawrence's treatment of his characters' destiny as essentially tragic. Thus Gerald Crich is beloved, yet deathly; he is a brilliant young man, yet a murderer. Above all, Gerald is suicidal, he is rotten at the core. [See Annex 6] The underlying obsessive question is whether human beings can alter their fates, and the implicit answer is that they are born under and live by pre-established circumstances and factors, which are dictated by universal dissolution. The process of universal dissolution can be neither avoided nor stopped; it is beyond the individual and beyond choice. The end of everything is a universal nothing, which is symbolically figured by a recurrent undercurrent of **darkness** and by the **paralyzing snow** in the "Snowed Up" chapter. Does this ultimately matter? The glosses upon it are left to Birkin, who goes from frustration and despair to **stoicism**²³ and **mysticism**²⁴. While on the train with Gerald, Birkin finds a moment when he lapses into his own thoughts:

"Well, if mankind is destroyed, if our race is destroyed like Sodom, and there is this beautiful evening with the luminous land and trees, I am satisfied. That which informs it all is there, and can never be lost. After all, what is mankind but just one expression of the incomprehensible. And if mankind passes away, it will only mean that this particular expression is completed and done. That which is expressed, and that which is to be expressed, cannot be diminished. There it is, in the shining evening. Let mankind pass away – time it did. The creative utterances will not cease, they will only be there. Humanity doesn't embody the utterance of the incomprehensible any more. Humanity is a dead letter. There will be a new embodiment, in a new way. Let humanity disappear as quick as possible." (WIL, p. 65)

The episode of the encounter between Birkin and Gerald on the platform, followed by their conversation on the train to London, approaches its end when the train nears its destination. The narrative voice comments that "Birkin watched the country, and was filled with a sort of hopelessness. He always felt this, on approaching London. His dislike of mankind, of the mass of mankind, amounted

almost to an illness." (WIL, p.67) Then Birkin gets out of his shell and confesses to Gerald what he has been thinking only to himself: "I always feel doomed when the train is running into London. I feel such a despair, so hopeless, as if it were the end of the world." (WIL, p. 67) They go together in a cab, and the episode ends with Birkin addressing Gerald an unsettling straightforward question that relates to his friend's doom: "Don't you feel like one of the damned?" (WIL, p. 68) Gerald answers in the negative and laughs, but Birkin's last words to him in this episode ("It is real death") come as a sharp anticipation of the friend's own tragic death as a symbol of the end of civilization.

Birkin is obsessed with Gerald, with whom he wants an "eternal union", **"another kind of love"**. He feels split between his spiritual and "sisterly" love for Hermione and his "passion of desire" for Gerald. He is repulsed by his overwrought, exclusively mental relationship with Hermione and eventually embittered by his failure to achieve the much desired "eternal union" with Gerald. Joyce Carol Oates argues that Birkin's immersion in educational theory makes his dilemma "emblematic of society's confusion in general"²⁵. Since he suffers from his own deceitful and frustrated life, Birkin tries to forget himself in work, but he cannot escape a sense of futility to all attempts at "social constructiveness".

Birkin's convictions and attitudes to the world are Lawrence's own. In the "Class-Room" episode, Birkin exposes what Lawrence himself thought were the dead conventions and "limited, false set of conceptions" rushing civilization towards its inevitable end. Those were **intellectualism** and **materialism**, two main aspects of Victorian **solidity**. [See Annex 7] "Class-Room" (Chapter III) is an outburst of Birkin's revolt against these aspects, which he sees embodied by Hermione. "A Chair" (Chapter XXVI) is largely taken by Birkin's theory that Victorianism, a paradigm viciously persisting in the 20th century, is based solely on **"mechanism, the very soul of materialism."** Birkin pleads for the rejection of this solidity (houses, rooms, furniture), he and Ursula decide that they do not need the chair they have just purchased and give it away. Thus the old, perverting and fatigued materialism is opposed by a new spirit which Birkin finds in **homelessness and a total victory of free spirit over material possessions:**

"Houses and furniture and clothes, they are all terms of an old base world, a detestable society of man. And if you have a Tudor house and old, beautiful furniture, it is only the past perpetuated on top of you, horrible. And if you have a perfect modern house done for you by Poirer, it is something else perpetuated on top of you. It is all horrible. It is all possessions, possessions, bullying you and turning you into a generalization. You have to be like Rodin, Michael Angelo, and leave a piece of raw rock unfinished to your figure. You must leave your surroundings sketchy, unfinished, so that you are never contained, never dominated from the outside." (WIL, p. 408)

In the same episode, Birkin assures Ursula that they will never have a complete place of their own or a home, and meanwhile they'll avoid possessing things. They contemplate a future when the two of them will "wander about on

the face of the earth", and Birkin, heated by the beauty of such projects of total freedom, declares that he wants to be "**disinherited**" (an echo of Paul's being left "naked of everything", a "derelict", in *Sons and Lovers*).

The novel's pervasive metaphor is **nakedness**, and nakedness lends *Women in Love* open to explorations of a new sense altogether: touch. *Sons and Lovers* and *The Rainbow* are gates to new perceptions of the world, but those perceptions are mainly visual. Paul is a visual artist, looking for a loss of self-consciousness and a fusion with his universe in true proportion. *The Rainbow*'s most memorable moments are also visual, culminating in Ursula's vision of "the earth's new architecture". In *Women in Love*, Lawrence turns **nakedness into a metaphor of vital connection with nature**. As Birkin thinks, nature is the preserver of "creative utterance", which will never pass away. In order to discover himself beyond his individual self, Birkin needs to feel nature with every fibre of his being. Thus in the "Breadalby" chapter, after a fierce fight with Hermione, he goes to the open country, to the hills, in a state of trance:

"He took off his clothes, and sat down naked among the primroses, moving his feet softly among the primroses, his legs, his knees, his arms right up to the arm-pits, lying down and letting them touch his belly, his breasts. It was such a fine, cool, subtle touch all over him, he seemed to saturate himself with their contact." (WIL, p. 120)

This episode of nudity and intimate contact with nature is what modern men like Birkin and Lawrence himself need to wash away the silt of conventions. Clothes are as deceitful as conventions: they hide the body, as conventions hide the nature of the person; worse than that, they replace it. Lawrence implies that the civilization created by man is an artificial set of conventions whose devastating effects are those of perverting man's natural being and estranging him from nature and from his own human nature.

The other highly significant episode of nudity in *Women in Love* is that of Birkin and Gerald wrestling in "Gladiatorial". [See Annex 1] The diction used to describe it suggests love-making. Nakedness is essential: the two men need to be naked because they have to establish contact through unobstructed touch. Indeed, touch in these scenes connects man to nature (in "Breadalby") and man to man (in "Gladiatorial"), suspending conventions, but not annihilating them. Birkin will not walk around naked, although clothes and conventions give him a sense of despair and hopelessness; the glorious moment of nakedness in "Breadalby" is followed by the first scene in "Coal-Dust", in which Gerald performs a demonstration of forcing his Arab mare to stand too close to a locomotive in motion in spite of the animal's instinctive fear of danger and death.

The issue of art and artists could not be absent in this novel. Since *Women in Love* "took its final shape in the midst of the period of the war" and is so full of bitterness, art is an aspect which Lawrence considered very seriously here. The eschatological view of civilization includes the art of the novel itself. The old conventions of neat plot and narrative progress or story, of characters as

stable egos are dead. There is no plot here, only pieces of it, the novel progressing through a series of symbolic scenes.

Art and the subject's perception of it is a major aspect which makes the difference between Birkin and Gerald. In the "Totem" chapter, set in a house in which nudity is naturally displayed, Gerald asks Rupert about an African wooden figure. He cannot make sense of it as art, and Rupert explains that "it conveys a complete truth". Gerald still wants to know whether it can be called "high art", and Rupert answers emphatically that "there are centuries and hundreds of centuries of development in a straight line, behind that carving; it is an awful pitch of culture, of a definite sort". Gerald is perplexed and also filled with hatred for "the sheer African thing". This is when Rupert's spirit gets inflamed and he starts one of the numerous lectures about the value of instincts, sensations, natural physicality and sensuality: "pure culture in sensation, culture in the physical consciousness, really ultimate *physical* consciousness, mindless, utterly sensual. It is so sensual as to be final, supreme." However, Gerald resents this because he wants "to keep certain illuminations, certain ideas like clothing." (*WIL*, pp. 88-89) The carved figure is also a nude, and perception of nudity is what makes the difference between Rupert's vital sensuality and Gerald's rather cold and material manliness. At the end of the novel (in "Exeunt") Birkin is "happily married" to Ursula, who is "all women" to him, yet incomplete. Joyce Carol Oates comments that "he will be a reasonably content and normal man, a husband to the passionate Ursula, yet unfulfilled; and one cannot quite believe that his frustrated love for Gerald will not surface in another form. His failure is not merely his own but civilization's as well: male and female are inexorably opposed, the integration of the two halves of the human soul is an impossibility in our time."²⁶

Birkin sees Gerald and Gudrun as flowers of dissolution, locked in the death process. Gerald, driven by a "drift towards death" (like Paul in the last chapter of *Sons and Lovers*), pursues this impulse to completion, and he chooses Gudrun as his murderer. Gudrun is an artist always fascinated by such things as violence, "the voluptuousness like that of machinery, cold and iron". In the "Death and Love" chapter, the love-making scene between Gudrun and Gerald is dangerous liberation on Gerald's part, devouring consummation on Gudrun's. Theirs is a dangerous attraction. [See Annex 8]

It must not be accidental that Loerke is an artist. He angers Ursula when he declares that his statuette of a girl on a horse is no more than an artistic composition. Surely Lawrence embodied in Loerke the intellectual type of the Bloomsbury artist. Loerke's aestheticism may be a translation in fiction of Fry's approach to art and his notion of "significant form". Loerke is very human and quite inhuman at the same time. He is courteous, reasonable and charming, but also deathly, a creature of the underworld. His name may be an allusion to Loki, the Norse god of discord and mischief, the very principle of dissolution. Loerke is fascinating in his repulsiveness: he is called "the little artist", he can bafflingly be "everywhere at once, like a gnome, suggesting drinks for the women, making

an obscure, slightly risky joke with the men, confusing and mystifying the waiter." (WIL, p. 468) Gerald calls him "that little vermin", "that little brat", and reproaches to Gudrun that she is fascinated by "that little dry snake, like a bird gaping ready to fall down its throat" (WIL, p. 518) and that she crawls "abject before the understanding of a flea." Gudrun, who has an artist's background, immediately makes the connection with "Blake's representation of the soul of a flea" and she wants "to fit it to Loerke", thinking that "Blake was a clown too." (WIL, p. 519). Birkin is also repelled by Loerke. He explains to Gerald that what women must find in him is "some satisfaction in basic repulsion. They seem to creep down some ghastly tunnel of darkness, and will never be satisfied till they've come to the end." Stirred by Gerald, who wants to know how far into this darkness Loerke is, Birkin unleashes all his rhetoric force again, saying that "he lives like a rat, in the river of corruption, just where it falls over into the bottomless pit. He's further on than we are." (WIL, p. 487)

Indeed, Loerke is portrayed as the epitome of what is worst in everybody. Loerke is ultimately what Gerald has imagined for himself – the subordination of all spontaneity, the triumph of "harmony" in industrial organization, and what infuriates Gerald about Loerke is that the latter is an embodiment of his own most deathly side. This "little artist" proclaims that "art should *interpret* industry, as art once interpreted religion." (WIL, p. 483)

Loerke seems to be the catalyst of disaster. He has no soul of his own, he is a fetish and a clown, an artist of decay, and his effect upon Gudrun is like that of a subtle poison. Symbolically, Gerald helplessly witnesses the destruction of his love, or of a part of his own soul, under this venomous influence. Loerke's gnomish presence also drives Ursula and Birkin away, which gives him and Gudrun the time to bring to the surface the destructive elements in the love of Gudrun and Gerald and to lead Gerald to self-annihilation.

Death is the most powerful force in *Women in Love*. Death is the bitterness Lawrence intended his readers to see in the characters of this novel. However, it is not natural death, not part of the natural cycle. Death in *Women in Love* is mechanical, final, it cuts the subject off from the world for ever. In "Exeunt", death throws Gerald's body, which is cold within and without, as irrecoverably dead matter into the abyss. Gudrun is neither victorious nor defeated, her Magna Mater stature is drastically diminished. Birkin is torn apart and bereft, while Ursula is affected by his unhappiness. Salvation is not absolutely denied, but seriously questioned.

WRITING TASKS

1. Symbolism and mythological analogies in D. H. Lawrence's fiction
2. D.H. Lawrence's subjective novel
3. The battle of the sexes in D. H. Lawrence's fiction
4. The predicament of the modern individual in D. H. Lawrence's fiction

II. ALDOUS HUXLEY'S NOVEL OF IDEAS

"I am chiefly interested in making clear a certain outlook on life."

Aldous Huxley, from an Interview given to a reporter of the Observer
in the early 1930s

This unit presents Aldous Huxley's contribution to the modernist English fiction. This contribution is the novel of ideas, which Huxley saw as a formula enabling him to experiment with the musicalisation of fiction. The formula Huxley envisaged was "symphonic literature", a "pure novel".

This unit introduces you to Huxley's background, which relied on sciences, literature and the arts. As he himself was a refined intellectual, his characters belong to this category.

Huxley's novel of ideas is also a satire, continuing a line of tradition and containing modernist innovative elements.

Huxley's novel *Point Counter Point* relies on the technique of the counterpoint. Thus a balanced character like Mark Rampion is counter-pointed by a cold intellectual like Philip Quarles or by the diabolic Spandrell.

Point Counter Point puts a novelist, Philip Quarles inside the novel. His role is to explain Huxley's own ideas about the novel of ideas, the musicalisation of fiction and about the "noncongenital" novelist.

Huxley is also the author of utopian and dystopian writing, and surely of all that he wrote in this key *Brave New World* enjoys tremendous popularity these days. This is so because we have already turned the soulless society projected by Huxley in his dystopia into our society today.

1. Aldous Huxley - A Lover of Science, Literature and the Arts

*"Being an unmetaphysically-minded person preoccupied with phenomenal appearances, not ultimate reality I think mostly of the diverse many... My essay, with those which accompany it in a recently published volume, **Do What You Will**, is a statement of the observable facts of diversity so stupidly overlooked by contemporary science and also contemporary religion."*

Aldous Huxley, *Letters*

Aldous Huxley's place in English literature is, according to T. S. Eliot, "unique and certainly established". Later, in 1963, Frank Whitehead wrote that "Huxley is more than an outstanding lucid middleman of ideas, for his wide reading has always been accompanied by exceptional powers of discrimination. Whatever the topic he seems able unerringly to select the significant from the trivial, and to organize the material so gathered into a pattern of thinking which relates it, in a direct and fully responsible way, to the key-problem of how to live, in our twentieth-century world, a life which is fully human."²⁷

Huxley's keen interest in science, scientific theories and ideas was doubled by his effort to penetrate the intimate essence of phenomena in order to give them artistic form in his novels.

Indeed, Huxley was one of the few writers of the 20th century who realized the overwhelming importance of science. He became, like his contemporary Marcel Proust, highly knowledgeable of theoretical sciences, assimilating them and putting them to use in his novels.

Of course, Huxley's cultural background also heavily relied on literature and the arts: he had an intimate knowledge of the English classics and romantics, and a strong inclination to the French symbolists, the Italian Renaissance and Spanish painting.

All these influences came together in what one may call the formula of a vast humanism, which was nevertheless coloured by notes of skepticism, biting irony or even Luciferic appetites.

2. Huxley's Characters

"To represent a completely adult, healthy good man one must be adultly good oneself. And nobody who was not himself adultly good would understand what was being talked about if such a character were truthfully rendered. That is why all deeply good characters in imaginative literature have to be, as it were, diluted with weakness and eccentricity; for only on such conditions are they comprehensible by readers and expressible by writers."

Aldous Huxley, *Letters*

Even in his early pieces of writing, Huxley focused on the social and professional category of the intellectuals, as he himself was one of them. In one of his attempts to define this category, Huxley stated that *"an intellectual is a person who has discovered something more interesting than sex"*.

However, he examined this category from all possible angles, almost through a microscopic lens. Huxley was keen on noticing and observing a world of appearance and pretence, tormented by the fever of vanity, by passions, vices and ambitions. This world attracted him like an absurd show, in which human beings (his characters) lost their real features, replacing them with the fashions and fetishes of modern civilization.

If Huxley may be accused, as he has often been, of lack of variety in terms of the social investigation implied in his novels, this drawback can be seen in relation to an obvious gain, which is the quality and depth of his observations.

The point is that Huxley meant to be honest with himself when he applied his creative skills to this particular social and professional group: the intellectuals. Thus, he took pains to render, as honestly as he could, in a realistic, grotesque or fantastic key, his own group.

3. Satire and European Models

When it was published in 1928, *Point Counter Point* no doubt shocked its readers with its frank depictions of infidelity, sexuality, and the highbrow discussions and debates of the arty characters. It seems that the novel continues to shock today. The shock comes not from the varieties of sexual experiences on display in Huxley's book, but from the author's keen dissection of the motives behind them, which makes them thrillingly fresh. Besides various aspects of sexual frustration or perversity, Huxley commented on everything from politics to ecology, touching topics that relate to the tendencies of his days, which have become nasty practices today.

✕ Huxley was disillusioned by the decadence of society and disgusted by the behaviour of his own class. *Point Counter Point* is a sardonic portrayal of the futility of modern life, where each character lamentably fails to be a harmonious adult. Huxley admitted that in some ways he was Philip Quarles, and that Philip's Notebook entries expressed many of his own ideas. This means that Huxley was determined not to spare himself in the first place when he started shooting satiric arrows in his novel. There are critics who consider that some of his outstanding contemporaries lie behind the fictitious masks in the novel. Thus, for instance Denis Burlap is an unflattering caricature of Huxley's former editor, John Middleton Murry.

✕ Many critics have seen in Huxley's fiction the formula of the satiric novel, with its subtle, exciting and unpredictable dialogues, which enabled the writer to debate important issues of his own time.

✕ Huxley's dialogues are polemics informed by irony, lucidity, sarcasm and cynicism. This is the case of the polemics between various characters in his novel *Point Counter Point*.

Sometimes the characters' discussions in *Point Counter Point* are just disclosures of their frames of mind, since they do not show any desire to let themselves influenced by their interlocutors' points of view.

New and complex influences of the most recent scientific theories of his time from Freud to Bergson, from Pavlov to Einstein, the innovations in philosophy and literature from Nietzsche to Anatole France, André Gide or Luigi Pirandello, and also the avant-gardes in painting or drama inspired Huxley, who used them in the dialogues of his books. A lot of these dialogues are debates pro and against those theories and ideas. Indeed, Huxley's satire is directed mainly towards the ideologies of his time, be those communist or capitalist, or ideas that revolutionized biology, psychology and philosophy. It is precisely this polemic note that gives Huxley's novels their cynical and highbrow air.

4. Continuing a Line of Tradition

"I've been reading little recently except the Great Authors... *The Odyssey* for example, - what a marvel...and such a lot to be learnt from it about Life; Shakespeare, and recently *The Paradise* of Dante, which is really staggering and, like everything by a sufficiently big man, quite dateless, completely actual and to the point."

Aldous Huxley, *Letters*

Despite their novelty and modern spirit, the tone of Huxley's novels can be traced in a line of tradition, which Huxley continued. There are notes in Huxley's novels which remind us of Oscar Wilde or G. B. Shaw's irony and witticism. Their satiric note continues a line in the English novel which goes as far back as Richardson, Fielding, Jane Austen and Victorian writers such as George Eliot and Charles Dickens.

Huxley complained that the twentieth century "still awaits its Lucertius, awaits its own philosophical Dante, its new Goethe...Will they appear?"²⁸ Huxley seems to have had doubts. With himself and his character Philip Quarles as parodic versions of the mind for the modern age, he expresses this need, and, as Jerome Meckier shows, "he plunders a variety of thinkers, classical as well as contemporary, for ideas he can assimilate into a 'guiding hypothesis,' 'some kind of over-all understanding of the world'. Searching for this sort of comprehension, he continually experiments with the novel of ideas, devising new aspects that refute the charge that the form is monolithic."²⁹

It can be argued that Huxley's intentions when he conceived his characters and devised some patterns of their behaviour were not only experimental but also didactic. Didacticism, rather than being some alien, indigestible element imported by Huxley into the novel, becomes an important feature which he borrowed from the greatest of his predecessors.

5. Mark Rampion's Point in *Point Counter Point*

"...a creature on a tight rope walking delicately, equilibrated, with mind and consciousness and spirit at one end of the balancing pole, and body and instinct and all that's unconscious and earthy and mysterious at the other. Balanced."

Aldous Huxley, *Point Counter Point*

Point Counter Point belongs to a period in Huxley's creation when the writer met and made friends with D. H. Lawrence. The real-life Lawrence becomes the fictitious Mark Rampion in *Point Counter Point*.

Although Huxley and Lawrence were fundamentally different in terms of temperament, preoccupations, philosophical convictions, literary tastes, etc., what drew them together was this very contrast. Since opposites attract, Huxley grew

fascinated by the overwhelming and rather unusual personality of his friend, by the lyrical exuberance, spontaneity and **messianic spirit** of his rebellious, non-conformist nature, which was sometimes so absurd and obstinate that it looked bizarre.

However, what recommended Lawrence to Huxley's tastes was that he could never be but authentic, sincere and honest. Having his early background in the infernal coal pits, being a self-taught person, suffering from tuberculosis, though never really caring about it, Lawrence (alias Mark Rampion in *Point Counter Point*) was the advocate of human nature against sexual hypocrisy, Puritan conceptions, or any other forms of tyranny which would stop or hinder the free development of the individual.

Mark Rampion is, indeed, the only character in *Point Counter Point* giving substance to the book, in the sense that he **seems to be the only one who makes sense in a senseless world**, a world which, in his own words, is "*an asylum of perverts*". Rampion is practically the only character in Huxley's novel whose life can be seen as the product of balance between mind and instinct, between intellect and emotion. Amid all the partial, unbalanced, incomplete lives of the people who surround him, he stands for wholeness and harmony, for living the whole life to the full, not part of it to excess.

Rampion finds himself surrounded by people who are less than fully human. To his mind, those who deny their humanity are "perverts":

"...And all perverted in the same way – by trying to be non-human. Non-humanly religious, non-humanly moral, non-humanly intellectual and scientific, non-humanly specialized and efficient, non-humanly the business man, non-humanly avaricious and property-loving, non-humanly lascivious and Don Juanesque, non-humanly the conscious individual even in love. All perverts. Perverted towards goodness or badness, towards spirit or flesh but always away from the central norm, always away from humanity. The world's an asylum of perverts." (PCP, pp. 563-564)

In the context of *Point Counter Point*, Rampion's remark is justifiable, all the more so as the audience to whom he makes his point are Burlap, Quarles, and Spandrell, who are perverts.

At the same time, Rampion's point here can be seen as a critique of the novel of ideas, related as it is to the sterility of modernity and of modern ideas in particular.

Rampion's other argument is that "*the root of the evil's in the individual psychology; so it's there ... you'd have to begin.*" He also envisages steps for what looks like a reformed society: "*the first step would be to make people live dualistically, in two compartments. In one compartment as industrialized workers, in the other as human beings. As idiots and machines for eight hours out of every twenty-four and real human beings for the rest.*" (PCP, p. 417) Rampion's ironical and bitter remark here leads to the novel *Brave New World*. There is an obvious incongruity between living "dualistically" as robots at work, on the one hand, and as human beings for the rest of the time, on the other. This point actually expresses

the opposite of Rampion's ideal of the perfect harmony the individuals should achieve within and without in order to maintain their human status. Why does Rampion make this point to Quarles then? The answer may be that Rampion objects to any form of dehumanization, and that he considers Quarles's cold and abstract intellectualism to be one of these forms leading to "robotism".

6. Philip Quarles, the Novelist in the Novel

If Rampion is the advocate of equilibrium in *Point Counter Point*, Philip Quarles is there not only as one of Rampion's opposites and opponents, but also as the novelist's own mouthpiece.

Philip Quarles is Mark Rampion's opposite because he represents the extreme of cold intellectualism: he lacks human warmth, and lacking it, he can neither give it nor respond to it. His frame of mind is bent on abstractions, and the image the reader is likely to get of this character is that of the modern abstract writer.

Philip's glosses on art, the modern novel, and the novelist's experiments with new techniques and devices echo Huxley's own struggles with the book we read: *Point Counter Point*. An essential issue in Philip's notebook is the technique of putting a novelist into the novel, which is exactly what Huxley did in *Point Counter Point*:

"Put a novelist into a novel. He justifies the aesthetic generalizations, which may be interesting – at least to me. He also justifies experiment. Specimens of his work may illustrate other possible or impossible ways of telling a story. And if you have him telling parts of the same story, you can make a variation on the theme. But why draw a line at one novelist inside your novel? Why not a second inside his? And a third inside the second novel? And so on to infinity, like those advertisements of Quaker Oats where there's a Quaker holding a box of oats on which is a picture of another Quaker holding another box of oats, etc., etc. At about the tenth remove you might have a novelist telling your story in algebraic symbols or in terms of variation in blood pressure, pulse, secretion of ductless glands, and reaction time."

Philip's point of putting a novelist into a novel reflects on Huxley's own technique of doing the same thing in *Point Counter Point*. He puts Philip into *Point Counter Point*, just as Philip (the novelist inside the novel) plans to do in his projected novel. The fact is that Philip's point is to multiply the novelists he puts into his projected novel, which creates a special effect. This implies going as deep and as far as possible until you create an effect of the so-called Chinese boxes (box within box within box within box within box, etc., with virtually no end or limits) or *mise-en-abyme*.

The implications are manifold: just one novelist (that is one reflective mind) cannot do justice to the complexity of reality; subjectivities and scientific backgrounds differ, but at the same time subjectivities are limited to one field, and

findings are partial. "Truths" cannot be fixed. That is why the novel needs many points of view (novelists) which can multiply the approaches and perspectives.

Philip's idea of multiplying the novelists inside his novel is also self-ironical and critical in that it exposes the relativity of truth and the fragility of story-telling with which the novel so painfully struggles.

7. The Musicalisation of Fiction

Point Counterpoint is the novel in which Huxley best expressed the sense of disillusionment and hopelessness of the period after World War I.

This novel is composed in such a way that the events of the plot form a contrapuntal pattern, which is a radical departure from the straightforward storytelling technique of the realistic novel.

All the major aspects of the novel are based on the technique of counterpoint.³⁰

Contrast is the key principle of counterpoint. Thus, in Huxley's novel themes and characters are counter-pointed, i.e. they are set in sharp contrast with one another. For instance, in the couple Elinor and Philip Quarles, the emotional Elinor is contrasted with the cerebral Philip. In the circle of the intellectuals depicted in the novel, the scientific Lord Edward is contrasted with the impulsive and political Webley, the heartless modern Lucy with the romantic Walter, the cockney Illidge with the upper-class group at Tantamount House, the religious hypocrite Burlap with the essentially honest Mark Rampion. The list of such contrasts in *Point Counter Point* can be expanded.

The guiding hypothesis of *Point Counter Point* is counterpoint on all levels. As a matter of fact, this is what justifies Huxley to use the technique of counterpoint, thus implying that the modern world is governed by grinding contrasts. This novel sets idea against idea, head against heart, body against mind, spirit against matter, art against life, husband against wife, parent against child.

Huxley explained his contrapuntal literary technique in his essay *Music at Night*:

"Juxtapose two accounts of the same human event, one in terms of pure science, the other in terms of religion, aesthetics, passion, even common sense; their discord will set up the most disquieting reverberations in the mind. Juxtapose, for example, physiology and mysticism...juxtapose acoustics and the music of Bach (perhaps I may be permitted to refer to the simultaneously scientific and aesthetic account of a concert in my novel, *Point Counter Point*); juxtapose chemistry and the soul (the ductless glands secrete among other things our moods, our aspirations, our philosophy of life)..."³¹

Counterpoint is Huxley's structural technique. *Point Counter Point* is governed, thematically and structurally, by it. Counterpoint gives musical dimension to philosophical dilemmas arising from the modern era's foremost scientific theory: relativity and the consequent accumulation of contradictory, diverse truths. The thoughts of the atypical minority with ideas to express

(the intellectuals) resist rewarding synthesis by a would-be orchestrating intelligence. Quarles's narrative techniques fail to produce a triumphant positive overview yet prove satirically appropriate to reveal the constantly proliferating diversity of modern life.

Point Counter Point is a novel in which **strategically placed discussion scenes** support the counterpoint technique. One of the most illustrative contrapuntal confrontations is the discussion between Mark Rampion and Spandrell. The fierce opposition between Rampion and Spandrell lies in their respective temperaments, frames of mind and attitudes to life in the first place. Spandrell, a "pervert" in Rampion's sense of the word and in the every-day sense, a Satanist, a death-worshipper, is the only character in the book who can effectively stand up to Rampion. This is so because Spandrell essentially stands for evil and destruction, while Rampion's ideal is harmony in life.

Spandrell's last argument with Rampion is occasioned by a demonstration he wants to make of Beethoven's *A Minor Quartet*. Spandrell's point is to demonstrate God's existence by playing the Quartet to Rampion. To Spandrell, who fights for his very life in this scene, God's abstract existence and the rather abstract purity of music can bring no equilibrium: he can neither find God in his heart, nor reconcile the abstract art of music with any human warmth.

Rampion, who is a pagan spirit, asks: "*Where's the famous proof of God's existence and the superiority of Jesus's morality?*" Spandrell responds by continuing to play his record. Rampion's reply is that music is the "*art of a man who's lost his body*". By continuing to play the record, Spandrell makes his point, and Rampion admits: "*It is heaven, it is the life of the soul*", but he insists that this life of the soul is diseased, a cancerous growth consuming the life of the body. Spandrell makes Rampion listen to the last and best part of the piece, and Rampion confesses: "*Almost thou persuadest me*". Spandrell is literally finished, he commits suicide soon after this, but Rampion and his point are not triumphant in this scene either. On the contrary, Rampion has been diminished in the process.

Spandrell is a distinctly Freudian conception. First, plainly, there is his *Oedipus complex*. Very significantly, he is also driven by death instincts. According to Freud, death instincts further the most universal endeavour of all living substance – namely to return to a state of inactivity. In this confrontation between Spandrell and Rampion, music provides Spandrell with an abstraction.

On the other hand, Rampion is a pagan, natural spirit, a worshipper of life. To him, abstraction (here the non-physical abstraction of music) is dangerous.

It is obvious that Mark Rampion and Spandrell are the opposite of each other. So are their ideas and attitudes to life. The argument between the two is the dramatization of a debate within Huxley himself. A part of the author that desires life (Rampion's point) is checked by another part that aspires to a heaven of inactivity (Spandrell's point supported by Beethoven's *Quartet*). Thus *Point Counter Point* represents Huxley's own crisis.³²

8. A Novelist's Novel of Ideas; the Pure Novel

In his notebook Philip Quarles writes:

"Novel of ideas. The character of each personage must be implied, as far as possible, in the ideas of which he is the mouthpiece. In so far as theories are rationalizations of sentiments, instincts, dispositions of soul, this is feasible. The chief defect of the novel of ideas is that you must write about people who have ideas to express – which excludes all but about .01 per cent of the human race. Hence the real, the congenital novelists don't write such books. But then I never pretended to be a congenital novelist." (PCP, p. 409-410)

The chief characteristic of the novel of ideas is that its characters are embodiments of ideas. Indeed, throughout *Point Counter Point* the reader gets the feeling that **characters are validated by their ideas**.

However, since the ideas of all characters clash, it is impossible to locate the novelist's own philosophy in a single character.

To fail to be "a born novelist" does not mean to fail to be a novelist at all. The difference is that while the born or congenital novelist is an incessant spinner of tales largely for their own sake, the noncongenital novelist or modern satirical novelist of ideas is an intellectually superior being. The noncongenital novelist successfully simulates the behaviour of a novelist to dramatize his themes and thus gain an audience. Anyway, the audience targeted by this kind of novel can only be an intellectual elite.

The irony in this passage actually invites the keen reader to read between the lines Philip's (and Huxley's) conviction that **the novelist of ideas is the mind of his age**. His mission is to keep the world safe for intelligence.

Philip also implies that he is a "noncongenital" novelist, i.e. a rather atypical specimen. Unlike the congenital novelist, the "noncongenital" one uses aspects of the novel such as character, story and plot to make a point of ideas. In other words, his characters are embodiments of ideas.

However, characters in Quarles's projected novel and Huxley's completed one are tormented by feelings or lack of feelings and long for relationships. The problem is that their author is skeptical both of feelings, relationships and of the viability of ideas. In a soulless world it is hard, if not impossible, to grow a soul. Without a soul, it is hard, if not impossible, to have relationships. In an age of proliferating ideas, it is hard, if not impossible, to prove the viability of the sciences generating those ideas, or to prove the validity of any idea. Even Rampion's attractive philosophy of life fails to offer a solution to this skeptical mood and frame of mind which turns the rest of the characters into "perverts".

Huxley's point in *Point Counter Point* is to question both tradition and novelty, both the formula of the traditional novel and the formula of his own novel of ideas.

Thus Huxley's novel of ideas deliberately fails to resolve itself. It remains stuck in inextricability. *Point Counter Point* thrusts the reader into modernity, a world of mutually exclusive choices, none of which seems totally satisfying. Huxley discredits everybody and everybody's point. Thus the only "balance" lies in the "counterpoint", which is a rather precarious equilibrium anyway.

Point Counterpoint renders Huxley's conception of "symphonic literature", i.e. a narrative work based on a plurality of themes and planes, a "pure novel". It is "pure" in the sense that it aspires to the abstract purity of ideas. Its purity also lies in its musical effects, the novel being Huxley's "translation" of counterpoint in music into counterpoint in the novel. Thus, music lends its abstract purity to an art (literature), whose medium is language, and to a genre (the novel) whose worn-out traditional aspects needed to be refined.

Instead of being a narrative based on plot, *Point Counter Point* is a vast orchestration of counter-pointed points which remain unresolved in paradox. It is significant that even Rampion, the only character in whose uncorrupted wisdom the reader feels tempted to find a foothold, voices a paradox. "Nobody asks you to be anything else but a man", he says, "neither angel nor daemon", and the only absolute thing that the human being will ever know is the absolute of the perfect equilibrium, the absolute of the perfect relativity, which, intellectually speaking, is a contradiction of terms, a paradox.

What Huxley gives us in *Point Counter Point* is, in fact, a sense and a taste of this paradox in a pure novel, whose message lies in between optimism and pessimism.

WRITING TASK

Huxley's contribution to the modernist novel in *Point Counter Point* (the technique of counterpoint, the "musicalisation of fiction", the "mise en abyme", Huxley's view of the predicament of the modern individual and of modern civilization)

9. Huxley's Dystopia *Brave New World*

"I am writing a novel about the future – on the horror of Wellsian Utopia and a revolt against it."

Aldous Huxley, *Letters*

Dystopia is a work of fiction that describes an imaginary place in the future where life is extremely bad because of deprivation or oppression or terror.

Huxley began with the intention of poking fun at the ideas of the novelist H. G. Wells, but he was caught up in the excitement of his own ideas. The novel was completed in four months and published in 1931.

The novel's title is taken from Shakespeare's *The Tempest* (Miranda's words in Act 5, Scene 1), and those lines in the play are used in the novel by John the Savage. John quotes the lines several times, but each time his mood changes from wonder and expectation through disappointment to bitterness.

In writing this book, Huxley did not mean to deal with the advancement of science as such, but with **the advancement of science as it affects the human individuals**. He saw it alarming, and though he coated the rather bitter pill in the sugar coating of comedy, the novel is a satire about the tendencies of his present and the appallingness of the future.

Brave New World is a perfect society, actually a World State governed by a set of principles. Its motto is **"Community, Identity, Stability"** (versus individual freedom). These three principles are intertwined. Community is a result of identity and stability. It is also achieved through a pseudo-religion that satirizes Christianity – a religion of Solidarity services that encourage people to attain it through sexual orgy. Identity is in large part the result of genetic engineering. Babies are conceived in bottles through a process of decantation and preconditioned to belong to one of the five castes that form the society. In the lower three classes, people are cloned in order to produce up to ninety six identical "twins". Identity is also achieved by teaching and conditioning everybody to conform, and anyone who is or feels different becomes literally an outcast – sent away to an island. Stability is applied to everything and everybody because its role is to minimize conflict, risk, and change.

Science is a means of control kept under control. The novel translates Huxley's worries about the possible misuse of the latest developments in biology, physiology, and psychology to achieve community, identity, stability. However, science must be kept under control, because any progress or any change to the perfectly balanced system is potentially dangerous to its stability.

Huxley did not use the phrase **"genetic engineering"** because it did not exist at that time, but his imagination figured it out in its basic lines of development. The mass production of human beings needs to be continued after the decanted babies are brought into the world. This happens in conditioning centres in which babies are conditioned to fit the needs of society: to always like their own caste, to feel happy they belong to it, and to consume. The main method used is **"hypnopaedia"** or sleep-teaching. Indeed it can be said that at every stage the state keeps its subjects under control by forms of **mind control**.³³

Brave New World is an artificially created society of **happy people**. They ought to be happy because unhappiness may lead to instability. The subjects of the World State start by being happy with their caste and work, and continue to be kept happy because there is nothing to make them sad: no parents to mourn, no spouses to feel attached to or clash against, no babies to conceive, bring to life or bring up, no material needs and frustrations, no emotional arousals of any sort. On the contrary, sexual promiscuity is encouraged but never called such name, comfort is guaranteed, amusement is provided by the **"feelies"** (films engaging their viewers'

variety of senses), there is no physical or emotional pain, people never get to be old. [See Annex 9]

Happiness is pursued through drugs. **Soma** is consumed by everybody in the Brave New World. It calms people and it gets them high at the same time, but without hangovers or any such nasty effects. Huxley believed in the possibility of a drug that would enable people to escape from themselves and help them achieve knowledge of God, but he made soma, called by one of the ten world controllers "**Christianity without tears**", a parody and a degradation of that possibility. In the Brave New World system, Ford is God and T³⁴ has replaced the symbol of the cross.

Love is debased and sexual pleasure is cheapened. Many females are sterile by design, and those who are not are trained by "Malthusian drill" to use contraceptives properly in their pursuit of sexual pleasure with as many men as they like. Nobody is allowed to become pregnant because nobody is born, only decanted from a bottle. The so-called "**viviparous**" parents are just an abhorred notion used to refer to times when natural parents existed.

Family is destroyed. The combination of genetic engineering, bottle-birth and sexual promiscuity means that there is no monogamy, marriage, or family. Since anything unpleasant or inconvenient should be eradicated, death – cessation to exist – should not be seen as something to worry or be sad about. This is achieved by conditioning: at the "hospitals for the dying", children are given sweets to eat when they hear of death occurring. Before death occurs, there is no sign of old age or senility. This approach to death depletes it of any spiritual significance, which Huxley made increasingly important in his later novels.

Brave New World is a globalised society, a World State, but with no individuals. **Individuality is annihilated by the system.** However, when "accidents" occur, the State's subjects may develop attitudes of nonconformity that singles them out as misfits. Bernard Marx is small for an Alpha and fond of solitude, which may be caused by an accident in the process of decantation; Helmholtz Watson knows he is too intelligent for the work he performs; John the Savage, born by a Beta in the Reservation, is himself an accident. Then he is discovered by Bernard and flown to the Brave New World to be exhibited there, although he has never been conditioned to become its citizen. Even the Controller, Mustapha Mond, stands apart by virtue of his leadership abilities. The point Huxley makes in this respect is that the system crushes differences: Bernard and Helmholtz are exiled; John is exiled and eventually commits suicide; Mond stifles his own individuality in exchange for the power he wields as a Controller.

Characters in *Brave New World* are cartoonish figures, largely deprived of human traits and used to voice ideas in words or to embody them in their behaviour. Of all the characters that the novel foregrounds, **Lenina Crowne is the prototype of the perfectly well-conditioned citizen.** She is young and "pneumatic" (i.e. sexy and glamorous in the brave new world jargon), happy and shallow, her only idiosyncrasy being that she sometimes spends more time than society approves dating one man exclusively. Her name is an unmistakable allusion

to V. I. Lenin, the father of socialist utopia. The allusion points to Lenina's conformity to the perfect system of Brave New World, which is a combination of the basic principles of socialism and capitalism. Like all well-conditioned citizens, Lenina believes in having sex when she wants it.

Bernard Marx, another character with a suggestive name, is an **Alpha specialist in sleep-teaching**. Bernard does not fit the uniformity that usually characterizes all members of the same caste. He is a member of the elite, but too small by their standards, and therefore considered deformed. He is a lover of solitude and too much bent on thinking and analyzing. He dislikes sports and when he first appears he seems to be rather unhappy with casual sex. All these are departures from the norm that eventually lead to Bernard's expulsion from the civilized system and to his exile to Iceland. At first Bernard seems to take pleasure in his being different, in being a nonconformist and a rebel. Later, his behaviour makes it clear that he is not a rebel by conviction, but turned rebel by his failure to be accepted. Underneath, he has always wanted to be a successful member of the ruling class, and he obviously enjoys the tribute of fame and popularity when he brings the interesting Savage from the Reservation. When he is sent to Iceland, he almost faints and protests bitterly.

Helmholtz Watson, like Bernard, differs from the average Alpha-plus intellectual. Helmholtz is a lot more intelligent than his job as an "emotional engineering" might require, but he is also successful in sports and sex. In one word, Helmholtz is too good for this system, and perhaps too good for any system. He is a nonconformist because he refuses to take the wishy-washy rhymes he is requested to produce as literature. He knows that the world is capable of a lot greater stuff than that, and what stirs him to stand up for this idea is John the Savage, who introduces him to Shakespeare. Although Helmholtz can appreciate only half of Shakespeare's poetic grandeur because of the limits imposed by his conditioning, he recognizes the genius of the English bard. He is unflinching in his desire to change his society, albeit he knows it cannot be changed, and he accepts exile to the bleak Falkland Islands in the hope that physical discomfort and the company of other dissidents will stimulate his writing.

John the Savage is dramatically caught between two worlds: he is the "illegal" son of two members of the civilized system, born and brought up on the Pueblo Reservation. He is the only character who can compare the two different worlds as an insider-outsider in between, and it is through him that Huxley shows that the Brave New World system is actually a monstrous creation beneath the attractive glamour of happiness, comfort and wellbeing. John grew up absorbing three cultures: the culture of the Brave New World passed on to him by his mother's stories; the Indian culture in which he lived, but which always treated him as an outsider; and Shakespeare's plays, which he read from a book that survived from pre-Fordian days. **John is in fact a hybrid** - inheriting elements from the three cultures and making a difference in the combination he achieves. John looks at both worlds through the lenses of the religion he acquired on the Reservation

(a mixture of Christianity and American Indian beliefs) and the old-fashioned but touchingly human morality he learned from reading Shakespeare. One might even say that John looks at the world mainly through eyes open to him by Shakespeare's plays. His beliefs contradict those of the Brave New World, as he shows in his struggle over sex with Lenina and his fight with the system after his mother dies. In his relation with Lenina, John is like a Shakespearean character inflamed by strong passion but looking for pure love at the same time. While to John passion is pure and spiritual connection a must, to Lenina the connection is simply physical and immediate. In the hospital scene, John is a Christ figure come to save a dulled humanity from lulling drug consumption and to awaken them to spiritual freedom. His discussion with the World Controller sums up his ideas and shows their incompatibility with the civilized system. [See Annex 9] He withdraws to Surry and practises self-flagellation to mortify his flesh in evident disgust by its glorification in the Brave New World. Lenina and other Brave New worlders go to Surry to watch him do it, and because this is more than he can bear John kills himself.

Mustapha Mond is one of the ten world controllers. His name might be an echo of the French "monde" – indicative of his top position in the World State. He is committed to his work and extremely intelligent. He has a very flexible mind, he understands people and ideas that are different, because his background and experience are rich. It seems this is essential in his position. He has read such forbidden books as the Bible and Shakespeare's works, but he keeps them locked in a safe, far from the eyes of other citizens. Indeed, he is a figure that resembles the Oxford professors that Huxley knew, and his discussion with John the Savage resembles a tutorial between an Oxford don and a most challenging student. [See Annex 9]

Being one of the most gifted scientists, the Controller made a choice as a young man to become one of the rulers instead of a troublesome dissident. His choice may be an exemplification of the only option offered by the system between stability and destruction. The controller is one of the very few brave new worlders who can choose, who has free will, and this makes him less cartoonish than the rest of the characters (with the exception of John the Savage).

10. *Brave New World* as Novel of Ideas

"Et peut-être un siècle nouveau commence-t-il, un siècle où les intellectuels et la classe cultivée rêveront aux moyens d'éviter les utopies et de retourner à une société non utopique, moins "parfaite" et plus libre."

Nicolas Berdiaeff

Settings are contrasted in *Brave New World*. The foregrounded setting is **London** as part of the hyper-civilized World State projected some 600 years in the future in 632 A. F. (After Ford). Centuries before, the previous type of human civilization was destroyed in the Nine Years' War. Out of its ruins grew the

World State, an all-powerful government ruled by ten World Controllers. Languages such as Polish, French, German, are dead, the literature of the old civilization is expurgated, "history is bunk" (as Mustapha Mond explains to John) and therefore historical places like Thebes and Babylon and Mycene, old legendary and mythical figures like Odysseus, Job, Jupiter and Jesus, literary figures like King Lear, ideas like the thoughts of Pascal are first debunked as subversive and then thrown into oblivion. Culture has been massacred, and the landmark of this erasure of old culture is the famous British Museum Massacre. There is a sustained campaign against the past. The cultural icons of London have been given new names: Charing Cross, the London railroad station, is now Charing T Rocket Station, Big Ben is now Big Henry (from Henry Ford), Westminster Abbey, one of England's most culturally charged shrines, is now merely the site of a night club, the Westminster Abbey Cabaret. In other words, history is erased and supplanted by a new perception of time as a present continuum, affected by no changes, a perfect society of all times. Nature is not part of this world, there is no depth to anything and anybody – only **glossy surfaces in a man-made artificial environment**.

The contrast is provided by the **Pueblo Reservation**, where old religions and beliefs are preserved, where time passes naturally since people grow old, bear the marks of old age and then die naturally, experiencing pain and making their relatives feel bereft at their death. The Reservation is an unspoiled natural world, where people live naturally in the midst of nature and the spirit of old humanity has survived. However, it is significant that the place is a Reservation, an isolated world within the reach and control of the Brave New World, which serves as a pool of research and as an example of how appallingly savage the old world can be. When she visits the Reservation in the company of Bernard, Lenina has too much of it, she cannot stand the sight an old Indian with wrinkled skin and fallen teeth, she feels distressed and needs to take a soma vacation.

The contrast provided by the two settings is paralleled by the opposition between John the Savage and the new worlders. In the last chapters of the book it will become **a conflict of ideas** in which John the Savage and Mustapha Mond cross polemic swords. [See Annex 9] Their dialogue gives a dramatic touch to the book, which is otherwise largely a **comedy**. The novel is also a **satire** in which Huxley mocks a whole group of politicians and technocrats who, supporting their actions on pernicious theories and ideas, might allow science and technology to govern human lives. Huxley also directs his satire against the products of a system where all music is a sort of corrupt nursery chant, worse than the worst kind of pop music, where slogans pass for poetry, where emotions are artificially stimulated and simulated, where everything (from sex to "art") is designed to give instant pleasure, but where there is no room for individual taste. Huxley's attack targets hedonism and the degradation of art (already strong tendencies in his time) in a mode of writing that treats alarming aspects in a funny way. Thus whilst it might have been a bleak novel like Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, where people

are controlled through fear and where the setting is consistently harsh, *Brave New World* has, on the surface at least, a lighter more humorous tone.

Like *Point Counter Point*, *Brave New World* is a **comedy of ideas**. Jerome Meckier shows that "in *Brave New World*, where the nature of happiness and the idea of freedom undergo severe scrutiny, Huxley employs the novel of ideas to satirize the related notions of several influential thinkers who work independently but constitute a latent conspiracy. /.../ Where *Point Counter Point* reveals a world of incommensurabilities, *Brave New World*, equally contrapuntal, exposes several prominent scientific and economic philosophies as invidious variations on the same themes. Huxley criticizes specific fallacies in the thinking of Freud, Ford, Pavlov, and J. B. Watson, whose ideas turn out to be compatible programs for the dehumanization of man. Constructing the brave new world in obedience to their complementary teachings, Huxley predicts awful consequences from the potential confluence of their mechanistically oriented aberrations."³⁵

WRITING TASKS

- 1) The main characteristics of dystopia in *Brave New World* (style, language, themes, characters, settings, the treatment of history)
- 2) *Point Counter Point* and *Brave New World* as novels of ideas

III. E. M. FORSTER'S NOVEL BETWEEN TRADITION AND MODERNISM

"I belong to the fag-end of Victorian liberalism, and can look back to an age whose challenges were moderate in their tone, and the cloud on whose horizon was no bigger than a man's hand. In many ways it was an admirable age."

E. M. Forster, *The Challenge of Our Time*

This unit will introduce you to E. M. Forster's novel, which is a formula that marked the transition from tradition to modernism.

On the one hand, Forster declared himself a Jane Austenite (an admirer of Jane Austen) and a writer at "the fag end of Victorian liberalism". On the other hand, he expressed the very essence of the modern writer torn between "prose" and "passion", thought and feeling, things and values.

Howards End is a "Condition of England" novel underpinned by the serious question "who shall inherit England?" and the plot is basically about the rights of property. To Forster, these rights were not solely given by material status, though this had to count, but also by spiritual legacies. Thus the novel harps on the theme of connection between nations and classes, sexes, rural and urban, intellectual culture and business culture, prose and passion, private and public.

A Passage to India is Forster's last novel published during his lifetime, and also considered his best book. *A Passage* is Forster's search for a meaning to be attached to Britain's imperial dominion in India, a rather muddling affair. The question here is if and how pieces of this broken circle can be put together. This novel is essentially symbolic and ambiguous. Its evasive and rich symbolism translates Forster's approach to the challenge of his time.

Forster was also a very keen critic of the novel, and the best synthesis of his approach to the genre is *Aspects of the Novel*. Forster's criticism is impressionistic, i.e. instinctive, rather than intellectual, abounding in highly visual metaphors and fresh images.

1. *Howards End* – A “Condition of England” Novel

Howards End is a novel that dates. It was written in 1910 and it is an arch-Edwardian “Condition of England” novel, largely the product of that Indian summer of Victorian liberal-humanist culture which immediately preceded World War I. At the same time, it is usually regarded as a “modern novel”, rather than Edwardian or Georgian.

That the novel appeared the year following C. F. G. Masterman's widely-read analysis of the state of the age in *The Condition of England* (1909) is extremely significant. Indeed, Masterman's book offers an interesting “context” for Forster's novel. Masterman's analysis of the early 20th century England reflects his position: both his sense of a need for a radical programme for the Liberal Party (of which he was a member), and his underlying uncertainty about the security of Liberal England. As with Forster, there is a **prophetic sense of this crisis** in Masterman's book, especially at the level of threatened values, and it is within this frame of reference that his analysis of “the condition of England” is undertaken. Masterman, too, had a profound sense of **the conflict between the old life and the new**, and London for him, as for Forster, **seems to epitomize the new urban existence as monstrous**.

Forster shared this perception of and outlook on the condition of England and translated them into the sharply contrasted patterns of his novel. On the one hand, there is **Howards End**, the metaphor of rural England and its *spiritus loci*, with its wych elm, hay and grass, elements that embody a remote mythically charged culture, but also the liberal-humanist culture and way of life. *Howards End* is a setting that Forster metaphorically associates with “**the unseen**”, a sort of spiritual life-force, not entirely unlike Lawrence's, although less robustly defined. There are echoes of this view of the rural as a repository of some vital connection between the self and nature in Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway* in those moments when Clarissa has flashbacks of her early youth at Bourton, but it seems that what differentiates Woolf's approach to this connection is that, unlike Lawrence's and Forster's, hers is essentially arty.

Forster laments the ruthless destruction of rural England and her spirit brought about by industry, the progress of technology and the monstrous development of industrialization. In *Two Cheers for Democracy* he says:

*"I cannot free myself from the conviction that something irreplaceable has been destroyed, and that a little piece of England has died as surely as if a bomb had hit it. I wonder what compensation there is in the world of the spirit, for the destruction of the life here, a life of tradition."*³⁶

This lament sounds strikingly similar to Lawrence's in many passages of his novels. For instance in *Lady Chatterley's Lover* the narrator's voice comments:

"This is history. One England blots out another. The miners had made the halls wealthy. Now they were blotting them out, as they had already blotted out the cottages. The industrial England blots out the agricultural England. One meaning blots out another. And the continuity is not organic, but mechanical."

In *Howards End* the embodiment of "the unseen", or of the "blotted meaning" evoked by Lawrence, is the elusive **Ruth Wilcox**. She is a rather mysterious character, always associated with Howards End (as a matter of fact, it is clear that she inherited it). Ruth is most of the times silent. When she speaks, she does not seem to say much, and what she says has a halo of the inexplicable. She does not need to explain or to make cases and she is hardly material. Ruth's presence is somehow insubstantial, she is more a "spirit" than a "person". Indeed, it is suggested that Ruth is "the unseen" spirit of Howards End. She befriends Margaret Schlegel in London, tells her scraps of stories about Howards End, which are more of the nature of illuminations than narratives (like the nostalgic "the paddock where the pony used to be"), and invites her to Howards End. Margaret never gets to visit Howards End while Ruth is still alive, and after just a few chapters of "bodily" presence, Ruth passes away as silently as she has lived, scribbling on a piece of paper while lying in the hospital bed that her will is to leave Howards End to Margaret. There is no explanation and no apparent logic to this, and the Wilcoxes destroy the slip of paper anyway. However, rather strangely and mysteriously, Margaret will marry Henry Wilcox and eventually inherit Howards End. When she goes there alone, she seems to feel Ruth's "unseen" presence (i.e. spirit) and the servant takes her for Ruth, but only "in fancy". The "meaning" Ruth makes in Forster's novel is not "blotted out" after all, it seems to underwrite this story of England as a hidden layer of palimpsest. Her gesture of passing on Howards End to Margaret makes sense in the metaphorical fabric of the book: **Margaret is chosen as Ruth's spiritual heir because she has a plan of connections**, and this is what England so badly needs. To Ruth, Howards End is not a property but essentially a spirit residing in the wych elm, the hay, the grass and the house.

The Schegel sisters Margaret and Helen have their triumph in *Howards End*, and this triumph is spiritual and it is mainly Margaret's. The sisters are representatives of the intellectual well-educated and civilized middle class. They are concert-goers and literature readers, persons of good taste, all of which sum up

Forster's idea of what jolly good English fellows should be like. Margaret and Helen are half-German, and the reader has to make sense of their place and even of their rights in England in the context of a book in which all the other characters assert their Englishness. Henry Wilcox, thinking of his adultery with Jacky Bast while he was married to Ruth, reaches the conclusion that "he was a good average Englishman, who had slipped" (*HE*, p. 243), Leonard Bast, a descendant of the old yeomen³⁷, a class now extinct, thinks "I'm an Englishman" (*HE*, p. 65). Aunt Juley, the sisters' aunt, affirms in chapter 2: **"I regard you Schlegels as English, English to the backbone."** (*HE*, p. 23) That they are half-German is also suggestive of a culture rich in philosophy, where ideas feed the spirit, which Margaret and Helen Schlegel have inherited. This spirit is their contribution to Forster's England and England's future in *Howards End*. Indeed, **Margaret at Howards End "attempted to realize England."** (*HE*, P. 204)

As for **London**, the novel traces Ruth, Margaret and Forster turning against the city. However, Forster himself felt his nostalgia for the rural and his justification of urban development as **"a collision of loyalties"** (*TC*, p. 67). The key charge against London is its ungraspable protean fluidity, its constant changing. While to Clarissa in Woolf's *Mrs Dalloway* this fluidity looked fascinating and lively most of the times, to Forster's characters it looks monstrous. The difference may lie in the two writers' preferences. Those preferences were surely determined by their commitment to urban modernity. Forster always expressed his nostalgia for the gradual destruction of pastoral rural England and glorified places like Wiltshire in *The Longest Journey* and *Howards End* (a translation in fiction of Hertfordshire, the place where Forster grew up), while Woolf felt attracted by the modern spirit of the metropolis and never quite at home in the country.

Woolf navigated London preferably on foot and in her *Diary* she wrote:

"London itself perpetually attracts, stimulates, gives me a play & a story & a poem, without any trouble, save that of moving my legs through the streets... To walk alone in London is the greatest rest."

Margaret's perception of London, which was also Forster's, in *Howards End* provides a contrast to Clarissa's in *Mrs. Dalloway* and Woolf's in the *Diary*. To Margaret:

"London was but a foretaste of this nomadic civilization which is altering human nature so profoundly, and throws upon personal relations a stress greater than they have ever born before."

Forster's London in *Howards End* is rootless, "nomadic", inexplicable, ungraspable, formless and ugly. It is a terrifying flux set in sharp contrast to *Howards End*. If Ruth Wilcox and Margaret Schlegel are spiritually connected with *Howards End*, the **Wilcoxes** are embodiments of the "nomadic" rootlessness of the city. They are city dwellers with no connections to the rural and only temporary residents at *Howards End*, which is to them merely a property. The Wilcoxes have no perception of "the unseen" and live the "outer life... in which telegrams and

anger count.” It is very significant that London as a place and the Wilcox characters are always associated in *Howards End* with the “panic and emptiness” of “telegrams and anger”. The novel is full of letters and telegrams that should never have been sent, or which are not received in time, or which are misinterpreted. Besides such failed written messages, there are oral messages, like Henry’s advice that Leonard Bast should quit his job, which prove to be false warnings. This flux of wasted or confusing messages is suggestive of the **growing difficulty of human communication in the modern times**.

The Wilcoxes are so tuned to this modern environment that they become the epitome of the modern family. Henry Wilcox “dreads ideas” and never bothers about his own insides. He is a basically good fellow whose character makes a very good point of **Forster’s concept of the “undeveloped heart”**, a deplorable syndrome from which the modern Englishman suffers. He is the *pater familias* who induces a set of attitudes to his family, for whom love, for instance, means marriage settlements. “Outwardly”, Henry is “cheerful, reliable, and brave”. However, since he has never explored his insides, he has left his heart undeveloped and developed his practical-mindedness and efficiency instead. He treats “marriage like a funeral, item by item, never raising his eyes to the whole.” If in the Schlegels’ house the most frequent discussions are about art and culture, the Wilcoxes’ typical family scene is the talk about business matters, stocks and bonds, insurance settlements, the settlement of a will. While Margaret sees the fragmentation around her and does her best to achieve connections, Henry is stuck in his settlements and leaves life fragmented and incomplete. He is unaware of personal relations and he has no idea how these can be achieved beyond the settlement.

The Wilcoxes have the “colonial spirit”, which all the modernist writers considered in negative terms. “Rule Britannia” kills Egbert, the key figure in Lawrence’s “England, My England”. Egbert is the “pure-blooded Englishman” whose whole instinct is against the war and who cannot be “aggressive on the score of his Englishness than a rose can be aggressive on the score of its rosiness.”³⁸ In *The Rainbow*, Ursula’s attack of “Rule Britannia” expresses Lawrence’s own anti-imperial views. Woolf expressed her anti-imperial views in the character of Septimus Warren Smith, the shell-shocked victim of World War I in *Mrs. Dalloway*. The second section “Time Passes” of Woolf’s *To the Lighthouse* is a structural fissure in which the destruction of World War I, a result of the colonial affairs, acquires cosmic proportions. Woolf’s *The Waves* envisages the collapse of the Empire in the figure of Percival. In Forster’s *Howards End*, Henry Wilcox makes his money from the Imperial and West African Rubber Company. The novel makes it very clear that **it is the Wilcoxes that have produced the modern civilization of which London is a symbol**. Rubber, which is Henry’s business, is needed, of course, primarily to make tires for cars, and the Wilcoxes have filled the English air with fumes. The Wilcoxes display the same arrogant and ruthless colonial “spirit” at home, where they are constantly changing houses and motoring

about between them. Henry declares to Margaret in a flare of triumph that "the motor car is here to stay", while none of the Schegels is enthusiastic about this marvelous achievement of modern technology. Not only in their habit of changing homes, but also in their leisure activities are the Wilcoxes colonial: their idea of a holiday is a motor tour.

Given this contrast of allegiances, it is clear that Ruth is a Wilcox only by name. Her marriage to Henry is an emblem of the **coexistence of the two kinds of life, rural and urban**, a coexistence which Forster realized might be coming to an end. Ruth's death brings a literal end to the Howard family, and the question posed by the novel is whether the disposition of her house will eventually bring the end of what she stands for. Even before she dies, a garage has replaced the paddock for the pony. By virtue of inheritance, Charles, the first-born son, will become the owner of Howards End, and that will be, indeed, the Howards' end. That is why Ruth's wish is to give Howards End to Margaret. The dramatic conflict in the novel revolves around this question: Who shall inherit Howards End?

If *Howards End* is a book about the condition of England "in or about 1910", the arches Forster imagines in it make it also a visionary novel. Forster's liberal dilemma and sense of crisis are doubled by **another crisis: that of the realistic novel itself in the early 20th century**. *Howards End* is a novel authored by a writer who placed himself at "the fag end of Victorian liberalism", who looks back to it and forward to other possibilities. As Peter Widdowson points out, the English realist tradition was essentially the product of the middle-class imagination. This tradition assumed that there is a palpable outside world or objective reality. The realists took it as their task to describe this reality, which accounts for their pursuit of verisimilitude, and the use of "faking" on its behalf. In the early 20th century, however, that presumably objective world started to fragment under so many factors and realism stopped being the mode that could reflect this fragmentation. This impasse of the traditional mode of realism offered niches for fantasy and other related modes that opened routes from withdrawal into the less palpable realms of "the unseen".³⁹

Fantasy is a mode that implies an uncertainty about the logic of more "empirical" perceptions, and it is here that the two crises intersect: the world can no longer make sense in terms of realism without exposing at the same time the inefficiency of liberal-humanist values and its apparatus in fiction, which is realism. **Forster was a liberal-humanist middle-class writer who had to remake the world using old "tools" only to expose their inadequacy**. *Howards End* is the expression of its author's awareness of this fissure and of an acute need for connection at many levels.

Howards End is one of those "formidable" and "amorphous" "masses", as Forster called the genre in *Aspects of the Novel*, which is recurrently shot through by fantasy. Ruth Wilcox makes very little sense as a character: she is too immaterial and slippery, too mysterious, too much an embodiment of the unseen, which flashes its eerie lights in the world of the seen. Her relation with Margaret

cannot be pinned down in realistic terms: it is a spiritual connection beyond justification and logic. *Howards End* is a place charged with a mythology which, as the narrator complains, has never been recorded. It mysteriously attracts Margaret and in the end it keeps everybody together in its fantastic embrace.

The epigraph "only connect" implies connections at all these levels: the "prose" of the Wilcoxes and the "prose" of Margaret's and Henry's marriage is connected with Helen's "romance", the pragmatism of the Wilcoxes is connected with the idealism of the Schlegels, the manly with the womanly, the Basts will continue in Helen's child, thus connecting themselves with the future, and the fantastic strain connects with realism at an intersection of modes aimed to find a temporary solution to the novel's impasse.

WRITING TASKS

- 1) Patterns of contrast in E.M. Forster's *Howards End*
- 2) *Howards End* as an epitome of impasse

2. *A Passage to India* – Forster's Journey East

"One could apply to India what Michelangelo said of death – that the fact of it kills but the thought of it vitalizes and brings strength."

E. M. Forster, *The Hill of Devi*

After fourteen years of "silence", in 1924, Forster published *A Passage to India*. The book was reviewed and hailed as a success. L. P. Hartley stated that "of all the novels that [had] appeared in England [that] year, Mr. Forster's is probably the most considerable." Hartley called it "intensely personal and intensely cosmic" and praised Forster's abilities in handling the central episode in the caves. The reviewer's favourable reception ends on a note which sums up those aspects of the book that make it a highly challenging and even frustrating reading: *A Passage* is "a disturbing, uncomfortable book. Its surface is so delicately and finely wrought that it pricks us at a thousand points. There is no emotional repose or security about it; it is for ever puncturing our complacency, it is a bed of thorns. The humour, irony and satire that awake the attention and delight the mind on every page all leave their sting."⁴⁰ Ralph Wright's review focuses on the "subject of enormous difficulty" chosen by Forster in *A Passage*, which is "race feeling, or the violent reaction from what seems the intolerable race feeling of our fellows". Wright considered that "race feeling" was still not the heart of the matter and put his finger on the central "thorn" Hartley talked about: "There is our behaviour to a conquered country. There is a ticklish question of conscience. There is great ignorance. There is a quite genuine hatred of muddling, and a suspicion that

whatever we do, go or stay, we shall produce disaster. It is race feeling multiplied by the old Irish situation multiplied by money." Wright opened the series of praises of the "admirably planned" opening of the book, though his appreciation insists upon the same issue of race feeling, leaving out Forster's excellent deference of meaning, which makes the novel so richly ambiguous from its very first line to its very last. Wright concludes with an enumeration of "the peculiar merits of the book": "It is written with great care. It is so full of knowledge and so beautifully perceptive. It is most delicately written. [...] *A Passage to India* is a better book than any earlier ones. It is as sensitive as they were, it is far better proportioned, and the mind which made it is more mature."⁴¹ J.B. Priestley saw in *A Passage* a civilized book: "Everything is present, ideas, character, action, atmosphere – a genuine civilized narrative". The reviewer considered this "an excellent background for Mr. Forster's somewhat elusive philosophy of personal relationships."⁴²

Some forty years after the publication of *A Passage*, in 1969, Sir Malcolm Bradbury re-assessed the difficulty of reading Forster:

*"Forster is a difficult and ambiguous writer, a writer who has often made his critics uneasy and caused them to feel how strangely elusive his work is."*⁴³

Forster took the title of this novel from Walt Whitman's poem and left it unaltered. The space of the poem itself displays its vastness and its gaps to be "fused", and fusion will be an attempt in Forster's "passage(s)" of the novel. Forster's old themes of connection and search for a home of the spirit weave the fabric of his Indian novel. The space of the text does not embrace one thing or form. It is **a metaphor of voyage and metaphor as voyage.** It is a space apprehensive of gaps, which are suggestively figured as caves in the second section, and it strives to fuse them. "Mosque" and "Temple", the first and last sections, are suggestive of a transcendent fusion, which is never quite managed, but suspended. Thus the reader's eye and mind are left in the limbo of "No, not yet" and "No, not there". Human relations, which are here threatened by "race feeling", are the achievement worth any effort in Forster's view. *A Passage to India* is another book about the difficulties encountered in the process of achieving them. While journeying through this large and confusing space, Forster's India, the reader's mind is challenged by many questions. Why does God Krishna refuse to come? Who/what is God Krishna? What does Rada Krishna mean? What does Aziz mean by "Oriental", "God", "Friend", "India", Fielding the Friend and Fielding "the blasted Englishman"? Mosque? Caves? Temple? Is Mrs Moore's vision negative or positive? What happened in the caves? Why did it happen? One has to take a voyage through all the "passages" of the book to the "Temple", the last section, which is a reiteration of the myth of the eternal return – an endless journey. Perhaps the significance of this myth contains all the answers, never giving an answer.

A Passage to India works its "passages" to "Caves" through metaphors which cluster in Godbole's song and Aziz's poem in "Mosque" to articulate

the main theme of the novel. The novel moves in its articulation of **the theme of friendship** from separation and loneliness, through attempted fusion, towards fusion, which is eventually suspended. The dynamics of the theme is carefully built in the concentric patterns of the novel which, when all the "passages" are in, takes the form of a *mandala*.⁴⁴ [See Plates 7 and 8] On the iconic and imagery level, the theme of separation corresponds to the formlessness of Chandrapore, where the eye is faced with a mobile jigsaw puzzle:

"It [Chandrapore] is a city of gardens. It is no city, but a forest sparsely scattered with huts." (AP, p. 31)

The patterns of the novel replicate one another in terms of the elements which are included in them: animate and inanimate, religions, philosophies, races, the arts. If on the natural level (animate and inanimate) "the sky settles everything", on the human level a similar order must be achieved to ensure the harmony of all elements. Throughout the novel, **details** like wasp, whisper, Godbole's song, which makes no sense to Fielding since Krishna "refuses to come", or rather "neglects to come", recur to give the novel its meanings. The importance of any detail, which is to partake in the *Oneness of the Universe*, is hinted at in the very first chapter of the book. Thus the first chapter suggests a model of reading, of making sense of the novel's "passages". This model asks the reader to connect details without leaving anything out in order to reach completeness – i.e. mandala.

To Forster, the supreme form of harmony on the human level is friendship. The first attempt at achieving it is made by Aziz in "Mosque", the novel's first section. Aziz contemplates the idea of a poem, a Persian inscription he would like to be written on his tomb:

*"Alas, without me for thousands of years
The Rose will blossom and the Spring will bloom,
But those who have secretly understood my heart –
They will approach and visit the grave where I lie."*

"/.../ The secret understanding of the heart! He repeated the phrase with tears in his eyes, and as he did so one of the pillars of the mosque seemed to quiver." (AP, p. 14)

The quiver is a strange illusion produced by Mrs Moore's presence. The mystery and miracle induced by the late hour, the darkness, the setting, and Aziz's mood is this "secret understanding of the heart", which draws Aziz and Mrs Moore together as friends. Aziz's soul "quivers" and he calls the old lady "Oriental". He projects this longing, which is the essence of his Oriental soul, onto both Mrs Moore and Fielding.

In the name of this friendship, Aziz decides to organize **the picnic at the Marabar Caves**. The space of the Caves, an extraordinary promise in the opening passage, moves now towards the centre. The caves are central in every possible sense: they are "extraordinary" and yet indescribable, they dominate the space from a distance, and the distance calls for connection in the metaphoric scheme of the novel.

That is why the **Caves are structurally central**. Their centrality is doubled by a sense shared by all the characters that they are an essential "reality", which will sooner or later be tested against their experience. No archetype of the journey as quest is ever complete or recognizable as such unless the hero/heroine/heroes go through a test, which in most of the cases is perilous. The novel is a quest, and the Caves perform the function of an "oracle".

Tested against the prehistoric geological space of the caves, a nothingness in the sense that it is before and beyond human language and narratology, and an everythingness in that it comprises all in embryo, human experience "falls under the rules of time" and becomes history. To Adela Quested, the echo in the caves sounds "as if" a rape took place. To Mrs. Moore, it sounds "as if" it delivered a nihilistic terrifying message. To Godbole, who is a Hindu, the echo does not carry any distinction that could give it a meaning. Aziz, a Muslim, falls victim to what Adela thinks it means. What Forster meant to signal was the "non-sense" and the "un-seen", the preverbal foundations of the human language. One of the philosophic dimensions of the novel lies here: the universe has the meaning we can or want to give it, and the meaning we give it is filtered through language, which shapes culture. Language and culture bias our response to the world.

Aziz faces trial for having allegedly raped Adela, but the young woman suddenly drops her charges because she seems to have a revelation in the courtroom. With this resolution, the novel slides into "Temple", its last section. The setting of "Temple" is Mau, a Hindu Princely State. Preparations are being made for the **Gokul Ashtami Festival, a celebration of Krishna's birth**. The rains and the **monsoon** are essential in the Hindu ritual: since the season is dominated by a God's birth, water is symbolic of abundance, fertility and life.

With "Temple", the novel suspends again the pitiable sequence of (hi)story. The temporal dimension of "Temple" is circular: it is the circularity of religion and ritual, reiterating what in mythic terms is called "the eternal return". In transcending time as irreversible, the "Temple" also transcends space boundaries: Krishna is "the Lord of the Universe", His home is boundless, His Kingdom includes everything and everybody, and this is why even the tiniest elements, details, thoughts, the living and the dead, animate and inanimate, masculine and feminine partake in the ritual whatever form they may take:

"They loved all men, the whole universe, and scraps of their past, tiny splinters of detail, emerged for a moment to melt into the universal warmth. Thus Godbole, though she was not important to him, remembered an old woman he had met in Chandrapore days. Chance brought her into his mind while it was in a heated state, he did not select her, she happened to occur among the throng of soliciting images, a tiny splinter, and he impelled her by his spiritual force to that place where completeness can be found. Completeness, not reconstruction. His senses grew thinner, he remembered a wasp seen he forgot where, perhaps on a stone. He loved the wasp equally." (AP, P. 283)

In "Temple", the novel also transcends politics: Mau is an independent State, there is no British dominion here and "race feelings" are suspended. The Muslim Aziz, who has been harping on the theme of friendship in "Mosque", now embittered by his experience in the "Caves", is also at Mau and meets Mrs. Moore's son, Ralph, whom he illogically calls "Oriental", rhythmically reiterating a similar moment in "Mosque". Aspects of pattern and rhythm intersect here: the pattern is a circular mandala, and rhythm is a variation upon the same theme – friendship. Reiteration and repetition, essential elements in the "eternal return", catch Aziz in their cycle unawares. And he says, as if caught in a trance, going beyond reason and suspending the pattern of (hi)story:

"Then you are an Oriental". He unclasped as he spoke, with a little shudder. Those words – he had said them to Mrs Moore in the mosque at the beginning of the cycle, from which, after so much suffering, he had got free. Never be friends with the English! Mosque, caves, mosque, caves. And here he was starting again." (AP, p. 301)

The myth of the eternal return – reiterated in the immersion of Krishna and his village into the waters of the tank at the end of the Festival is a **metaphor of cyclicity**: to Aziz, this cyclicity is God-the Friend – Mrs Moore-the Friend – her son-the Friend- Fielding-the Friend – caves – trial – "friends again" – "no, not yet" – "no, not there". Indeed, the novel's final note is one of separation, but a momentary one. "Not yet" and "not there" are promises of "some time", "somewhere". There is a promise that sooner or later history will enter the cycle of "the eternal return" and acquire a mythical dimension, that all the sufferings and misunderstandings will be washed away. The tension of the caves episode has almost entered the cycle, Fielding and Aziz are "friends again", but history still upsets the circularity of the pattern. Nevertheless, history is "here" and "now", not "for ever", which the larger pattern of the novel is a metaphor of.

Placing Forster between Victorianism and modernity, Malcolm Bradbury states that he "is as post-impressionist and post-Paterian⁴⁵ as anyone else in Bloomsbury, and the ultimate field of action for the arts is that of the "unseen". Procedurally this symbolist power seems to lie in the analogue with music, and is gained through aspects of the novel outside and beyond story, in thematic recurrences, leitmotifs, pattern and rhythm, prophetic song. The problem of whether art can redeem life by transcending it is crucial to modernism; the encounter between the formally transcendent – the epiphany, the unitary symbol – and the world of history recurs throughout its works. And Forster's view is, like that of most modernism, dualistic: art may reach beyond the world of men and things – the world of 'story' – but it can never leave that world behind, and must seek meanings and connections in it. What distinguishes Forster is the faint hope which he entertains on behalf of history: the hope that by understanding and right relationship men may win for it a limited redemption."⁴⁶

WRITING TASKS

- 1) The motif of journey and quest in *A Passage to India*
- 2) Charged symbolism and mythological analogies in *A Passage to India*
- 3) Home and homelessness in *Howards End* and *A Passage to India*
- 4) Colonial issues in *Howards End* and *A Passage to India*

3. *Aspects of the Novel* – Impressionistic Criticism

“And I have chosen the title Aspects because it is unscientific and vague, because it leaves us the maximum of freedom, because it means both the different ways we can look at a novel and the different ways a novelist can look at his work.”

E. M. Forster, *Aspects of the Novel*

The Clark lectures Forster gave in the academic year 1926-1927, which were published under the title *Aspects of the Novel*, are chatty, “informal, indeed talkative, in their tone”, as Forster describes them in the “Author’s Note” (AP, p. 21). By vagueness, Forster did not mean imprecision or inaccuracy; what he implied was that his “unscientific” terms suited his impressionistic and flexible criticism.

With the seven aspects that Forster proposes, one embarks on a journey through the different strata of the novel. The journey starts with *The Story*, which “is the highest factor common to all novels” (AP, p. 40). With this aspect we are earthbound, as Forster implies. **Story is “the backbone of a novel”** and also its oldest, lowest and simplest aspects, engaging its audience in “wondering what would happen next” (AP, p. 41). The definition of story is “a narrative of events arranged in their time-sequence – dinner coming after breakfast, Tuesday after Monday, decay after death, and so on.” (AP, p. 42) However, Forster, a writer sensitive to the alterations of the hands of the clock, warns us that “the author may dislike the clock” and gives the examples of Emily Brontë, who “tried to hide hers” in *Wuthering Heights*, Sterne, who “turned his upside down” in *Tristram Shandy*, Marcel Proust, who, “still more ingenious, kept altering the hands” (AP, p. 43).

According to Forster, story needs to be transcended. Thus, the journey through the *Aspects* takes us to **people**, i.e. characters. Forster distinguishes between two categories: **flat** and **round** characters. The images “flat” and “round” are visual, plastic, and probably very close to Roger Fry’s notion of characters as “volumes”. **“Flat” characters “can be expressed in a single sentence”** (AP, p. 73). One can find them in Proust, and with few exceptions Wells’s characters “are flat as a photograph”. The novelist needs “flat” characters, Forster goes on to argue, because, hard as characters are to handle, those characters “never need

reintroducing, never run away, have not to be watched for development, and provide their own atmosphere – little luminous discs of a pre-arranged size, pushed hither and thither like counters across the void or between the stars.” (AP, p. 74) What Forster means is that flat characters are not altered by the events of the plot, and thus they are easily recognized and easily remembered by the reader afterwards.

Round characters are “remembered in connection with the great scenes through which” they pass “and as modified by those scenes.” (AP, p. 74) Becky Sharp in Thackeray’s *Vanity Fair* is a round character, Jane Austen’s characters are round, “or capable of rotundity.” (AP, p. 78). The test of a round character is whether it is capable to surprise in a convincing way. If it does not surprise, it is flat. If it does not convince, it is flat pretending to be round.

Forster’s discussion of the two types of characters in close connection with plot implies that what he actually meant was to render the characters’ temporal dimension – changed or unchanged by the events accumulated in time – in spatial terms. With this, his impressionistic criticism, relying on highly plastic, visual metaphors, acquires something of the powerful suggestiveness, concreteness, and immediate effectiveness of the plastic arts. Being so effectively plastic, Forster’s distinction between flat and round characters is hard to forget and remarkably efficient in characterizing a wide range of characters in fiction.

In terms of **point of view**, Forster’s heart goes to Dickens’s power of “bouncing” the reader into the game of **point of view** in *Bleak House*, and then to Gide’s *Les Faux Monnayeurs*, which is now **omniscient**, now **partly omniscient**, now giving us the point of view through the diary of one of the characters. Comparing the two writers “powers”, Forster judges that **Dickens’s is “instinctive”, while Gide’s is “sophisticated”**. He will return to Gide and discuss his “**fragmented plot**” with much admiration for Gide’s “**formidable erosions of contour**” (AP, p. 99), a very powerful **impressionistic image** meant to **visualize the formidable fluidity** of the French writer’s novel.

The next objective in the journey through *Aspects* is **plot**. Plot, like story, “is also a **narrative of events, the emphasis falling on causality**.” “The king died, and the queen died of grief is a plot. The time-sequence is preserved, but the sense of causality overshadows it.” Forster argues that there are plots with mystery in them, and that form is “capable of high development. It suspends the time-sequence, it moves as far away from the story as its limitations will allow.” If story raises the readers’ curiosity about “what happens next?”, **plot, a higher aspect, demands, in Forster’s view, “intelligence and memory also.”** (AP, p. 87) Through plot, the writer “can descend even deeper and peer into the subconscious” (AP, p. 85), and thus “he can show the subconscious short-circuiting straight into action.” (AP, p. 86) That is what Forster does in *A Passage to India* when Adela enters the cave. It is then that her subconscious “short-circuits into action”, upsetting the linearity of the story, breaking its chronology and suspending its time-sequence with an expanded perception of one moment of panic. It is here, indeed,

that point of view and plot do their job of running against the neat chronology of story and shaping the pattern of the mandala. From Adela's angle, the "fists and fingers" of the Marabar Caves read as rape. However, later in the novel she will have a moment of revelation, significantly visual, when, realizing the muddle she is in, she drops the charge against Aziz. Mrs Moore's negative experience in the caves will later become the basis of her "double vision", which projects the novel onto its prophetic axis. From Godbole's angle, the "fists and fingers" of Marabar are not foregrounding any meaning because the Hindu's view of everything is equidistant.

The good plot-maker conceives of his novels from a height. For Forster, Hardy, who seems to be "essentially a poet", is the greatest plot-maker.

Exciting and beautiful as it may be, plot still looks to Forster like "a fetish, borrowed from the drama, from the spatial limitations of the stage." A plot closes the novel, and Forster wishes it were not so:

"After all, why has a novel to be planned? Cannot it grow? Why need it close, as a play closes? Cannot it open out? Instead of standing above his work and controlling it, cannot the novelist throw himself into it and be carried along to some goal that he does not foresee?" (AP, p. 95)

As Forster argues, it is the modern novel that can "break up" and "boil down" plot, which is what Gide does in *Les Faux Monnayeurs*.

Having reached this stage and this point on the map of the novel, Forster promises to catalogue the "rainbow" of its vast territory, exploring the higher regions of "poetry, religion, passion" within its expanding arch.

* **"Fantasy" and "prophecy"**, the next aspects, share a "sense of mythology" and also the "fantastic-prophetic axis" (AP, p. 102). Fantasy **"implies the supernatural, but need not express it."** There are four devices writers of a fantastic turn may deploy, and those are: the introduction of fantastic creatures like "a god, ghost, angel, monkey, monster, midget, witch into ordinary life; or the introduction of ordinary men into no-man's-land, the future, the past, the interior of the earth, the fourth dimension; or divings into and dividings into personality; or finally the device of parody or adaptation." (AP, p. 106) Forster reads Joyce's *Ulysses* as fantasy, though he admits that the book is far more than that – it is "an inverted Victorianism" (AP, p.113). It is also an adaptation, a modern journey which coheres because it finds its parallels in the journey of a hero through the seas of Greece. In Forster's reading, *Ulysses* is a book where "smaller mythologies swarm and pullulate, like vermin between the scales of a poisonous snake. Heaven and earth fill with infernal life, personalities melt, sexes interchange, until the whole universe, including poor, pleasure-loving Mr Bloom, is involved in one joyless orgy." (AP, P. 114) The company in which Forster places Joyce's *Ulysses* is Sterne's *Tristram Shandy*.

* **Prophecy "is a tone of voice"** (AP, p. 116), and the qualities it demands are "humility and the suspension of the sense of humour" (AP, p. 117). To Forster's mind, Dostoyevsky is the epitome of the prophetic writer. Dostoyevsky's novel

is "spasmodically realistic. And it gives us the sensation of a song or of sound." (AP, p. 125) Besides Dostoyevsky, other prophetic writers are, in Forster's account, Melville, D. H. Lawrence and Emily Brontë. *Moby Dick's* essence "lies outside words" (AP, p. 126), what is valuable in Lawrence's fiction "cannot be put into words", and "*Wuthering Heights* is filled with sound – storm and rushing wind – a sound more important than words and thoughts." (AP, p. 131)

Of the pair "**pattern and rhythm**", the last destination of the journey, Forster prefers rhythm, as it carries with it a temporal dimension and also achieves "internal harmony" in a most subtle way. In Proust's *À la recherche du temps perdu*, "the little phrase" recurring at different points in the narrative functions as some sort of flashing light, giving the whole novel an intermittent rhythm. Rhythm, unlike pattern, which is always there, leads to an effect similar to the effect of mystery or surprise achieved through a masterful handling of plot or through a clever shifting of point of view. Proust does not excel in either point of view juggling or plot-making. His trick is the handling of time translated into he Bergsonian *durée* by the rhythmical recurrence of the "little phrase". It may be argued that Bloomsbury writers like Virginia Woolf and Forster wrote their most remarkable novels to a rhythm and not to a plot. The rhythm of the waves lends its fluidity to the neat design of *To the Lighthouse* and articulates the "gigantic conversation" in *The Waves*. In Forster's novels, "little phrases" like "only connect", "panic and emptiness", "telegrams and anger", "trail, trail of grass" rhythmically recur in *Howards End*, and tiny details like wasp, echoes of chants and songs fill in the vast space of *A Passage to India*. Woolf declared that *The Waves* is "a mystic eyeless book", and Forster considered that *A Passage* is a poetic and philosophic novel. By deploying the most immaterial and elusive aspects of the novel and leaving the conventions of realism behind, Forster and Woolf took off the ground and made landfall in a new country – a country in which the old genre of the novel could grow wings.

Probably the best passages and sections in *Aspects of the Novel* are those where Forster the critic is doubled by Forster the inspired writer. This is so because in those sections the writer's enthusiasm and passion inflame the critic's imagination. Many passages in the book radiate with the poetry Forster admired so much in Lawrence's novels and which is to be found in many of his own. The whole book abounds in metaphoric language and this saves it both from academic pedantry and from platitude. The definitions may not stand a severe scrutiny, but they are clear, nicely-put, and they give us Forster's view on the matter, and the view counts. What is more important, most of the aspects surveyed by Forster apply to his own novels and to the modernist novel written by contemporaries like Woolf, Joyce, Gide and Proust.

TAKE AWAY

- 1) Why is *Aspects of the Novel* impressionistic criticism?
- 2) What kind of "journey" is *Aspects of the Novel*?
- 3) What notions and concepts discussed by Forster in *Aspects of the Novel* apply to the modernist novel? Give examples.
- 4) How does Forster the writer support Forster the critic in *Aspects of the Novel*?

NOTES

I. D. H. Lawrence's Novel of Sensibility

2. Lawrence and the Theory of the Novel

1. F. R. Leavis, *D. H. Lawrence: Novelist*, Harmondsworth, Penguin Books in association with Chatto and Windus, 1964, p. 325
2. Letter to Barbara Low, 16 September 1916, *The Collected Letters of D. H. Lawrence*, ed. Harry T. Moore, 2 vols., Heinemann, London, 1962, p. 475
3. Available at
<http://www.poetrymagazines.org.uk/magazine/record.asp?id=4489>[4 March 2006]
4. D. H. Lawrence, *The Symbolic Meaning: The Uncollected Versions of Studies in Classic American Literature*, ed. Armin Arnold, Arundel, Centaur Press Ltd., 1962, p. 69
5. Friedrich Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil: Prelude to a Philosophy of the Future*, Trans. R.J. Hollingdale, Harmondsworth, Penguin Books, 1973, p. 17
6. Available at
<http://www.poetrymagazines.org.uk/magazine/record.asp?id=4489>[4 March 2006]
7. Calvin Bedient, *Architects of the Self. George Eliot, D. H. Lawrence, and E. M. Forster*, University of California Press, Los Angeles, London, 1972, p. 3
8. Mikhail Bakhtin – Russian philosopher, best known for his analysis of the **dialogic** and **polyphonic** nature of linguistic production, according to which discourse operates on several planes at once and subverts the monologic authority of the ruling class. In *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics* (1929, 2nd edition 1963), Bakhtin argues that the many competing ideologies and discourses in Fyodor Dostoevsky's novels are never resolved through Hegelian synthesis but exist in mutual tension throughout the work. In *Rabelais and His World* (1965), Bakhtin shows how the official and monolithic worldview of the Middle Ages was constantly parodied and ridiculed through what he calls the **Carnavalesque**, a genre of parody and blasphemy that undermined official cultural authority. His other works include *Dialogic Imagination* (1975).

3. Lawrence and Painting – A Modern Blake?

9. **William Blake** – (1757-1827) British poet, painter, visionary mystic, and engraver, who illustrated and printed his own books.

Blake proclaimed the supremacy of the imagination over the rationalism and materialism of the 18th century. In the "Prophetic Books", Blake expressed his lifelong concern with the struggle of the soul to free its natural energies from reason and organized religion. Misunderstanding shadowed Blake's career as a writer and artist and it was left to later generations to recognize his importance.

10. **Alasdair Gray** – Scottish artist born on 28 December 1934. He describes himself as a "maker of imagined objects" and has been a prolific producer of novels, short stories, plays, poems, pamphlets and literary criticism. Gray is also an accomplished artist who has painted remarkable murals and is the designer and illustrator of his own books and those of other writers.

5. Taboo Breaking

11. David Lodge, *The Practice of Writing. Essays, Lectures, Reviews, and a Diary*, Secker and Warburg, London, 1996, p.100

6. Free Indirect Style

12. Although Lawrence and Joyce were taboo breakers, there seems to have been an enmity between them. Lawrence declared in a letter that "I am one of the people who can't read *Ulysses*. Only bits. But I am glad to have seen the book, since in Europe they usually mention us together – James Joyce and D. H. Lawrence – and I feel I ought to know in what company I creep to immortality. I guess Joyce would look as much askance on me as I on him." To his wife Frieda Lawrence wrote that "the last part of [*Ulysses*] is the dirtiest, most indecent, obscene thing ever written."
13. Randall Stevenson, *The British Novel Since the Thirties*, Institutul European, Iași, 1993, p. 21
14. Randall Stevenson, *op. cit.*, p. 22

7. Antagonism and Oneness in *The Rainbow*

15. **Phallocentrism** means a system centered on men, or showing a preference for traditionally masculine qualities.

8. Symbolism in *The Rainbow*

16. Noah was a biblical patriarch. At God's command, Noah built an ark and saved himself and a pair of every kind of animal from the Flood.

9. *Women in Love*, *The Rainbow's* Sequel

17. Joyce Carol Oates, "Lawrence's *Götterdämmerung*: The Apocalyptic Vision of *Women in Love*", available at <http://jco.usfea.edu/womeninlove.html> [6 March 2006]

18. **Nibelung** – (noun, mythology) any of a race of subterranean dwarfs whose hoard of riches and magic ring were taken from them by Siegfried; a follower of Siegfried; one of the Burgundian kings in the *Nibelungenlied*
19. **Hermes** (Greek mythology) is the messenger of Zeus and the herald of the gods. Hermes, the robber and cattle driver, the prince of tricksters, the thief at the gates, the bringer of dreams, the patron of travellers, is also the governor of the tongue, and the guide of intelligent speech. Hermes is called Argiphontes, for having killed the all-seeing Argus who guarded Io, and **Psychopompus** for being the guide of souls to the Underworld. The latter hypostasis of Hermes is strongly associated with Gerald in the “Death and Love” episode, when he comes “for vindication” to make love to Gudrun the next day after his father’s death. Gudrun perceives Gerald’s face as “strange and luminous” and the whole person of Gerald as “inevitable as a supernatural being”. A few minutes later he reminds her of “an apparition, the young Hermes.”
20. **Bruderschaft** – (noun, German) the state or relationship of being brothers; fellowship; an association of men, such as a fraternity or union, united for common purposes
21. **Magna Mater** – (noun) great nature goddess of ancient Phrygia in Asia Minor, counterpart of Greek Rhea and Roman Ops
22. **Eschatological** – (adj.) from **eschatology**, which is a belief or a doctrine concerning the ultimate or final things, such as death, the destiny of humanity, the Second Coming, or the Last Judgement
23. **Stoicism** – (noun) indifference to pleasure or pain, impassiveness
24. **Mysticism** – (noun) immediate consciousness of the transcendent or ultimate reality or God; a belief in the existence of realities beyond perceptual or intellectual apprehension that are central to being and directly accessible by subjective experience.
25. Joyce Carol Oates, “Lawrence’s *Göterdämmerung*: The Apocalyptic Vision of *Women in Love*”, available at <http://jco.usfca.edu/womeninlove.html> [6 March 2006]
26. Joyce Carol Oates, “Lawrence’s *Göterdämmerung*: The Apocalyptic Vision of *Women in Love*”, available at <http://jco.usfca.edu/womeninlove.html> [6 March 2006]

II. ALDOUS HUXLEY'S NOVEL OF IDEAS

1. Aldous Huxley - A Lover of Science, Literature and the Arts

27. Frank Whitehead, Preface to Aldous Huxley, *Selected Essays*, London: Chatto & Windus, 1963, p. 13

4. Continuing a Line of Tradition

28. Aldous Huxley, *On the Margin*, London: Chatto and Windus, 1928, p. 38
29. Jerome Meckier, "Introduction: Aldous Huxley and the Congenital Novelists: New Ideas about the Novel of Ideas", in *Critical Essays on Aldous Huxley*, Edited by Jerome Meckier, G.K. Hall & Co., 1996, p. 19

7. The Musicalisation of Fiction

30. *Counterpoint*: 1. in music, counterpoint means the sounding together of two or more melodic lines, each of which displays an individual and differentiated melodic contour and rhythmic profile; 2. in any of the other arts, counterpoint refers to a theme or element that forms a contrast with another, a term borrowed from music, which is suggestively reflected in the title of Huxley's novel.
31. Aldous Huxley, *Music at Night and Other Essays*, New York: Doubleday Doran & Co., 1931, pp. 37-38
32. See this argument developed by Keith May in "Accepting the Universe: The "Rampion-Hypothesis in *Point Counter Point* and *Island*", in *Critical Essays on Aldous Huxley*, Edited by Jerome Meckier, G.K. Hall & Co., 1996, pp. 220-227

9. Huxley's Dystopia *Brave New World*

33. Henry Ford (see note below) completely revolutionized the working day, introducing a pattern of three eight-hour shifts and doubling his workers' pay. Ford also introduced a **Sociological Department** to his factory in order to influence the way his men led their lives. In fact, the Ford workers' pay was dependent on their meeting certain standards of behaviour laid down by their employer. That was a form of **conditioning** and **mind control**, and these practices introduced by Ford are clearly the governing practices of the new system in Huxley's dystopia!
34. Year zero of this new civilization is 1908, when **Henry Ford** launched the **Model-T**, the first mass-produced car. Mass production is so important in the new system that the name Ford has replaced God in the BNW vocabulary, and the same system of manufacture is applied not just to consumer goods but also to the production of human beings!

11. *Brave New World* as Novel of Ideas

35. Jerome Meckier, "Introduction: Aldous Huxley and the Congenital Novelists: New Ideas about the Novel of Ideas", in *Critical Essays on Aldous Huxley*, Edited by Jerome Meckier, G. K. Hall & Co., 1996, p. 19

III. E. M. FORSTER'S NOVEL BETWEEN TRADITION AND MODERNISM

1. *Howards End* – A "Condition of England" Novel

36. E.M. Forster, *Two Cheers for Democracy*, Edited by Oliver Stallybrass, Edward Arnold, Abinger Edition, vol. 4, [London], 1973, p. 68
37. **Yeoman** - a small farmer who cultivates his own land; one of a class of English freeholders below the gentry
38. Egbert is metaphorically called "a born rose". Surely Lawrence meant the association of this "pure-blooded Englishman" with a rose of all flowers because the rose is the symbol of England. It is obvious that Lawrence expressed his anti-colonial views by the tragic fate he imagined for Egbert in this short story. Egbert is eventually killed in the war and his tragic death is the final scene.
39. See Peter Widdowson, *E. M. Forster's Howards End. Fiction as History*, Sussex University Press, 1977

2. *A Passage to India* – Forster's Journey East

40. L. P. Hartley, the "Spectator", 28 June 1924
41. Ralph Wright, the "New Statesman", XXIII, 21 June 1924
42. J. B. Priestley, the "London Mercury", LVII, July 1924
43. Malcolm Bradbury, "Two Passages to India: Forster as Victorian and Modern", in *Aspects of E. M. Forster*, ed. Oliver Stallybrass, 1969, p. 231
44. **Mandala** is any of various ritualistic geometric designs symbolic of the universe, used in Hinduism and Buddhism as an aid to meditation. Mandala is a cosmogram and a psychogram at the same time, which implies that the complexity of the universe is mirrored in the complexity of the psyche
45. **Walter Pater** (1839-1894) was an English essayist and critic, author of *Studies in the History of the Renaissance* (1873). His ideal of the aesthetic life, his cult of beauty as opposed to bare asceticism, and his theory of the stimulating effect of the pursuit of beauty as an ideal of its own gave rise to an aesthetic movement promoted later by Oscar Wilde, a former student of Pater at Oxford, and in the early 20th century by the Bloomsbury artists.

46. Malcolm Bradbury, "Two Passages to India: Forster as Victorian and Modern", in *Aspects of E. M. Forster*, ed. Oliver Stallybrass, 1969, pp. 229-230

ANNEXES

ANNEX 1

"Gerald fastened the door and pushed the furniture aside. The room was large, there was plenty of space, it was thickly carpeted. Then he quickly threw off his clothes, and waited for Birkin. The latter, white and thin, came over to him. Birkin was more a presence than a visible object; Gerald was aware of him completely, but not really visually. Whereas Gerald himself was concrete and noticeable, a piece of pure final substance.

"Now," said Birkin, "I will show you what I learned, and what I remember. You let me take you so —" And his hands closed on the naked body of the other man. In another moment, he had Gerald swung over lightly and balanced against his knee, head downwards. Relaxed, Gerald sprang to his feet with eyes glittering.

"That's smart," he said. "Now try again."

So the two men began to struggle together. They were very dissimilar. Birkin was tall and narrow, his bones were very thin and fine. Gerald was much heavier and more plastic. His bones were strong and round, his limbs were rounded, all his contours were beautifully and fully moulded. He seemed to stand with a proper, rich weight on the face of the earth, whilst Birkin seemed to have the centre of gravitation in his own middle. And Gerald had a rich, frictional kind of strength, rather mechanical, but sudden and invincible, whereas Birkin was abstract as to be almost intangible. He impinged invisibly upon the other man, scarcely seeming to touch him, like a garment, and then suddenly piercing in a tense fine grip that seemed to penetrate into the very quick of Gerald's being.

They stopped, they discussed methods, they practised grips and throws, they became accustomed to each other, to each other's rhythm, they got a kind of mutual physical understanding. And then again they had a real struggle. They seemed to drive their white flesh deeper and deeper against each other, as if they would break into a oneness. Birkin had a great subtle energy, that would press upon the other man with an uncanny force, weigh him like a spell put upon him. Then it would pass, and Gerald would heave free, with white, heaving, dazzling movements.

So, the two men entwined and wrestled with each other, working nearer and nearer. Both were white and clear, but Gerald flushed smart red where he was touched, and Birkin remained white and tense. He seemed to penetrate into Gerald's more solid, more diffuse bulk, to interfuse his body through the body of the other, as if to bring it subtly into subjection, always

seizing with some rapid necromantic foreknowledge every motion of the other flesh, converting and counteracting it, playing upon the limbs and trunk of Gerald like some hard wind. It was as if Birkin's whole physical intelligence interpenetrated into Gerald's body, as if his fine, sublimated energy entered into the flesh of the fuller man, like some potency, casting a fine net, a prison, through the muscles into the very depths of Gerald's physical being.

/.../

At length Gerald lay back inert on the carpet, his breast rising in great slow panting, whilst Birkin kneeled over him, almost unconscious. Birkin was much more exhausted. He caught little, short breaths, he could scarcely breathe any more. The earth seemed to tilt and sway, and a complete darkness was coming over his mind. He did not know what happened. He slid forward quite unconscious, over Gerald, and Gerald did not notice. Then he was half-conscious again, aware only of the strange tilting and sliding of the world. The world was sliding, everything was sliding off into the darkness. And he was sliding, endlessly, endlessly away.

He came to consciousness again, hearing an immense knocking outside. What could be happening, what was it, the great hammer-stroke resounding through the house? He did not know. And then it came to him that it was his own heart beating. But that seemed impossible, the noise was outside. No, it was inside himself, it was his own heart. And the beating was painful, so strained, surcharged. He wondered if Gerald heard it. He did not know whether he were standing or lying or falling. /.../

Gerald, however, was still less conscious than Birkin. They waited dimly, in a sort of not-being, for many uncounted, unknown minutes.

"Of course –" panted Gerald, "I didn't have to be rough – with you – I had to keep back – my force –"

Birkin heard the sound as if his own spirit stood behind him, outside him, and listened to it. His body was in a trance of exhaustion, his spirit heard thinly. His body could not answer. Only he knew his heart was getting quieter. He was divided entirely between his spirit, which stood outside, and knew, and his body, that was a plunging, unconscious stroke of blood.

"I could have thrown you – using violence –" panted Gerald. "But you beat me right enough."

"Yes," said Birkin, hardening his throat and producing the words in the tension there, "you're much stronger than I – you could beat me – easily."

Then he relaxed again to the terrible plunging of his heart and his blood.

"It surprised me," panted Gerald, "what strength you've got. Almost supernatural."

"For a moment," said Birkin.

He still heard as if it were his own disembodied spirit hearing, standing at some distance behind him. It drew nearer, however, his spirit. And the violent striking of blood in his chest was sinking quieter, allowing his mind to come back. He realized that he was leaning with all his weight on the soft body of the other man. It startled him, because he thought he had withdrawn. He recovered himself, and sat up. But he was still vague and unestablished. He put out his hand to steady himself. It touched the hand of Gerald, that was lying out on the floor. And Gerald's hand closed warm and sudden over Birkin's, they remained exhausted and breathless, the one hand clasped closely over the other. It was Birkin whose hand, in swift response, had closed in a strong, warm clasp over the hand of the other. Gerald's clasp had been sudden and momentaneous.

The normal consciousness, however, was returning, ebbing back. Birkin could breathe naturally again."

DH. Lawrence, *Women in Love* ("Gladiatorial")

ANNEX 2

"In everything she saw she grasped and groped to find the creation of the living God, instead of the old, hard barren form of bygone living. Sometimes great terror possessed her. Sometimes she lost touch, she lost her feeling, she could only know the old horror of the husk which bound in her and all mankind. They were all in prison, they were all going mad.

She saw the stiffened bodies of the colliers, which seemed already enclosed in a coffin, she saw their unchanging eyes, the eyes of those who are buried alive: she saw the hard, cutting edges of the new houses, which seemed to spread over the hillside in their insentient triumph, the triumphs of horrible, amorphous angles and straight lines, the expression of corruption triumphant and unopposed, corruption so pure that it is hard and brittle: she saw the dun atmosphere over the blackened hills opposite, the dark blotches of houses, slate roofed and amorphous, brittle, hard edged new houses advancing from Beldover to meet the corrupt new houses from Lethley, the houses of Lethley advancing to mix with the houses of Hainor, a dry, brittle, terrible corruption spreading over the face of the land, and she was sick with a nausea so deep that she perished as she sat. And then, in the blowing clouds, she saw a band of faint iridescence colouring in faint colours a portion of the hill. And forgetting, startled, she looked for the hovering colour and saw a rainbow forming itself. In one place it gleamed fiercely, and, her heart anguished with hope, she sought the shadow of iris where the bow should be. Steadily the colour gathered, mysteriously, from nowhere, it took presence upon itself, there was a faint, vast rainbow. The arc bended and strengthened itself till it arched indomitable, making great architecture of light and colour and the space of heaven, its pedestals luminous in the corruption of new houses on the low hill, its arch the top of heaven.

And the rainbow stood on the earth. She knew that the sordid people who crept hard-scaled and separate on the face of the world's corruption were living still, that the rainbow was arched in their blood and would quiver to life in their spirit, that they would cast off their horny covering of disintegration, that new, clean, naked bodies would issue to a new germination, to a new growth, rising to the light and the wind and the clean rain of heaven. She saw in the rainbow the earth's new architecture, the old, brittle corruption of houses and factories swept away, the world built up in a living fabric of truth, fitting to the over-arching heaven."

D. H. Lawrence, *The Rainbow*

ANNEX 3

"As they lay close together, complete and beyond the touch of time or change, it was as if they were at the very centre of all the slow wheeling of space and the rapid agitation of life, deep, deep inside them all, at the centre where there is utter radiance, and eternal being, and the silence absorbed in praise: the steady core of all movements, the unawakened sleep of all wakefulness. They found themselves there, and they lay still, in each other's arms; for their moment they were at the heart of eternity, whilst time roared far off, forever far off, towards the rim.

Then gradually they were passed away from the supreme centre, down the circles of praise and joy and gladness, further and further out, towards the noise and the friction. But their hearts had burned and were tempered by the inner reality, they were unalterably glad.

Gradually they began to wake up, the noises outside became more real. They understood and answered the call outside. They counted the strokes of the bell. And when they counted midday, they understood that it was midday, in the world, and for themselves also.

It dawned upon her that she was hungry. She had been getting hungrier for a lifetime. But even yet it was not sufficiently real to rouse her. A long way off she could hear the words, "I am dying of hunger." Yet she lay still, separate, at peace, and the words were unuttered. There was still another lapse.

And then, quite calmly, even a little surprised, she was in the present, and was saying:

"I am dying with hunger."

"So am I," he said calmly, as if it were of not the slightest significance. And they relapsed into the warm, golden stillness. And the minutes flowed unheeded past the window outside.

Then suddenly she stirred against him.

"My dear, I am dying of hunger," she said.

It was a slight pain to him to be brought to.

"We'll get up," he said, unmoving.

And she sank her head on to him again, and they lay still, lapsing. Half consciously, he heard the clock chime the hour. She did not hear.

"Do get up," she murmured at length, "and give me something to eat."

"Yes," he said, and he put his arms round her, and she lay with her face on him. They were faintly astonished that they did not move. The minutes rustled louder at the window.

"Let me go then," he said.

She lifted her head from him, relinquishingly. With a little breaking away, he moved out of bed, and was taking his clothes. She stretched out her hand to him.

"You are so nice," she said, and he went back for a moment or two.

Then actually he did slip into some clothes, and, looking round quickly at her, was gone out of the room. She lay translated again into a pale, clearer peace. As if she were a spirit, she listened to the noise of him downstairs, as if she were no longer of the material world."

D. H. Lawrence, *The Rainbow*

ANNEX 4

"There is," he said, in a voice of pure abstraction, "a final me which is stark and impersonal and beyond responsibility. So there is a final you. And it is there I would want to meet you – not in the emotional, loving plane – but there beyond, where there is no speech and no terms of agreement. There we are two stark, unknown beings, two utterly strange creatures, I would want to approach you, and you me. – And there could be no obligation, because there is no standard for action there, because no understanding has been reaped from that plane. It is quite inhuman, – so there can be no calling to book, in any form whatsoever – because one is outside the pale of all that is accepted, and nothing known applies. One can only follow the impulse, taking that which lies in front, and responsible for nothing, asked for nothing, giving nothing, only each taking according to the primal desire."

Ursula listened to this speech, her mind dumb and almost senseless, what he said was so unexpected and so untoward.

"It is just purely selfish," she said.

"If it is pure, yes. But it isn't selfish at all. Because I don't *know* what I want of you. I deliver *myself* over to the unknown, in coming to you, I am without reserves or defences, stripped entirely into the unknown. Only there needs the pledge between us, that we will both cast off everything, cast off ourselves even, and cease to be, so that that which is perfectly ourselves can take place in us."

She pondered along her own line of thought.

"But it is because you love me, that you want me?" she persisted.

"No, it isn't. It is because I believe in you – if I *do* believe in you."

"Aren't you sure?" she laughed, suddenly hurt.

He was looking at her steadfastly, scarcely heeding what she said.

"Yes, I must believe in you, or else I shouldn't be saying this," he replied. "But that is all the proof I have. I don't feel any very strong belief at this particular moment."

She disliked him for this sudden relapse into weariness and faithlessness.

"But don't you think me good-looking?" she persisted, in a mocking voice.

He looked at her, to see if she felt she was good-looking.

"I don't *feel* that you're good-looking," he said.

"Not even attractive?" she mocked, biting.

He knitted his brows in sudden exasperation.

"Don't you see that it's not a question of visual appreciation in the least," he cried. "I don't *want* to see you. I've seen plenty of women, I'm sick and weary of seeing them. I want a woman I don't see."

/.../

"What I want is a strange conjunction with you –" he said quietly;"- not meeting and mingling; - you are quite right: - but an equilibrium, a pure balance of two single beings: - as the stars balance each other."

D. H. Lawrence, *Women in Love* ("Mino")

"Only nobody takes the trouble to be essential."

"How essential?" she said.

"I do think," he said, "that the world is only held together by the mystic junction, the ultimate unison between people – a bond. And the immediate bond is between man and woman."

"But it's such old hat," said Ursula. "Why should love be a bond? No, I'm not having any."

"If you are walking westward," he said, "you forfeit the northern and eastward and southern direction. – If you admit a unison, you forfeit all the possibilities of chaos."

"But love is freedom," she declared.

"Don't cant to me," he replied. "Love is a direction which excludes all other directions. It's a freedom *together*, if you like."

"No," she said, "love includes everything."

"Sentimental cant," he replied. "You want the state of chaos, that's all. It is ultimate nihilism, this freedom-in-love business, this freedom which is love and love which is freedom. As a matter of fact, if you enter into a pure unison, it is irrevocable, and it is never pure till it is irrevocable. And when it is irrevocable, it is one way, like the path of a star."

"Ha!" she cried bitterly. "It is the old dead morality."

"No," he said, "it is the law of creation. One is committed. One must commit oneself to a junction with the other – for ever. But it is not selfless – it is a maintaining of the self in mystic balance and integrity – like a star balanced with another star."

D. H. Lawrence, *Women in Love* ("Mino")

ANNEX 5

"The sisters found a little place where a tiny stream flowed into the lake, with reeds and flowery marsh of pink yellow herb, and a gravelly bank to the side. Here they ran delicately ashore, with their frail boat, the two girls took off their shoes and stockings and went through the water's edge to the grass. The tiny ripples of the lake were warm and clear, they lifted their boat on to the bank, and looked round with joy. They were quite alone in a forsaken little stream-mouth, and on the knoll just behind was the clump of trees.

"We will bathe just for a moment," said Ursula, "and then we'll have tea."

They looked round. Nobody could notice them, or could come up in time to see them. In less than a minute Ursula had thrown off her clothes and had slipped naked into the water, and was swimming out. Quickly, Gudrun joined her. They swam silently and blissfully for a few minutes, circling round their little stream-mouth. Then they slipped ashore and ran into the grove again, like nymphs.

"How lovely it is to be free," said Ursula, running swiftly here and there between the tree trunks, quite naked, her hair blowing loose. The grove was of beech-trees, big and splendid, a steel-grey scaffolding of trunks and boughs, with level sprays of strong green here and there, whilst through the northern side the distance glimmered open as through a window.

When they had run and danced themselves dry, the girls quickly dressed and sat down to the fragrant tea. They sat on the northern side of the grove, in the yellow sunshine facing the slope of the grassy hill, alone in a little wild world of their own. The tea was hot and aromatic, there were delicious sandwiches of cucumber and of caviare, and winy cakes.

"Are you happy, Prune?" cried Ursula in delight, looking at her sister.

"Ursula, I'm perfectly happy," replied Gudrun gravely, looking at the westering sun.

"So am I."

When they were together, doing the things they enjoyed, the two sisters were quite complete in a perfect world of their own. And this was one of the perfect moments of freedom and delight, such as children alone know, when all seems a perfect and blissful adventure.

When they had finished tea, the two girls sat on, silent and serene. Then Ursula, who had a beautiful strong voice, began to sing to herself, softly: "Annchen von Tharau." Gudrun listened, as she sat beneath the trees, and the yearning came into her heart. Ursula seemed so peaceful and sufficient unto herself, sitting there unconsciously crooning her song, strong and unquestioned at the centre of her own universe. And Gudrun felt

herself outside. Always this desolating, agonized feeling, that she was outside of life, an onlooker, whilst Ursula was a partaker, caused Gudrun to suffer from a sense of her own negation, and made her, that she must always demand the other to be aware of her, to be in connection with her.

"Do you mind if I do Dalcroze to that tune, Hurtler?" she asked in a curious muted tone, scarce moving her lips.

"What did you say?" asked Ursula, looking up in peaceful surprise.

"Will you sing while I do Dalcroze?" said Gudrun, suffering at having to repeat herself.

Ursula thought a moment, gathering her straying wits together.

"While you do –?" she asked vaguely.

"Dalcroze movements," said Gudrun, suffering tortures of self-consciousness, even because of her sister.

"Oh, Dalcroze! I couldn't catch the name. *Do* – I should love to see you," cried Ursula, with childish surprised brightness. "What shall I sing?"

"Sing anything you like, and I'll take the rhythm from it."

But Ursula could not for her life think of anything to sing. However, she suddenly began, in a laughing, teasing voice:

"My love – is a high-born lady –"

Gudrun, looking as if some invisible chain weighed on her hands and feet, began slowly to dance in eurythmic manner, pulsing and fluttering rhythmically with her feet, making slower, regular gestures with her hands and arms, now spreading her arms wide, now raising them above her head, now flinging them softly apart, and lifting her face, her feet all the time beating and running to the measure of the song, as if it were some strange incantation, her white, rapt form drifting here and there in a strange impulsive rhapsody, seeming to be lifted on a breeze of incantation, shuddering with strange little runs. Ursula sat on the grass, her mouth open in her singing, her eyes laughing as if she thought it was a great joke, but a yellow light flashing up in them, as she caught some of the unconscious ritualistic suggestion of the complex shuddering and waving and drifting of her sister's white form, that was clutched in pure, mindless, tossing rhythm, and a will set powerful in a kind of hypnotic influence.

"My love is a high-born lady – She is-s-s- rather dark than shady –" rang out Ursula's laughing, satiric song, and quicker, fiercer than Gudrun in the dance, stamping as if she were trying to throw off some bond, flinging her hands suddenly and stamping again, then rushing with face uplifted and throat full and beautiful, and eyes half closed, sightless. The sun was low and yellow, sinking down, and in the sky floated a thin, ineffectual moon."

D. H. Lawrence, *Women in Love* ("Water-Party")

ANNEX 6

"He merely represented the miners in a higher sense when he perceived that the only way to fulfil perfectly the will of man was to establish the perfect, inhuman machine. But he represented them very essentially, they were far behind, out of date, squabbling for their material equality. The desire had already transmuted into this new and greater desire, for a perfect intervening mechanism between man and Matter, the desire to translate the Godhead into pure mechanism.

As soon as Gerald entered the firm, the convulsion of death ran through the old system. He had all his life been tortured by a furious and destructive demon, which possessed him sometimes like an insanity. This temper now entered like a virus into the firm, and there were cruel eruptions. Terrible and inhuman were his examinations into every detail; there was no privacy he would spare, no old sentiment but he would turn it over. The old grey managers, the old grey clerks, the doddering old pensioners, he looked at them, and removed them as so much lumber. The whole concern seemed like a hospital of invalid employees. He had no emotional qualms. He arranged what pensions were necessary, he looked for efficient substitutes, and when these were found, he substituted them for the old hands.

/.../

His mind was very active. But it was like a bubble floating in the darkness. At any moment it might burst and leave him in chaos. He would not die. He knew that. He would go on living, but the meaning would have collapsed out of him, his divine reason would be gone. In a strangely indifferent, sterile way, he was frightened. But he could not react even to the fear. It was as if his centres of feeling were drying up. He remained calm, calculative and healthy, and quite freely deliberate, even whilst he felt, with faint, small but sterile final horror, that his mystic reason was breaking, giving way now, at this crisis.

And it was a strain. He knew there was no equilibrium. He would have to go in some direction, shortly, to find relief. Only Birkin kept the fear definitely off him, saved him his quick sufficiency in life, by the odd mobility and changeableness which seemed to contain the quintessence of faith. But then Gerald must always come away from Birkin, as from a Church service, back to the outside real world of work and life. There it was, it did not alter, and words were futilities. He had to keep himself in reckoning with the world of work and material life. And it became more and more difficult, such a strange pressure was upon him, as if the very middle of him were a vacuum, and outside were an awful tension.

He had found his most satisfactory relief in women. After a debauch with some desperate woman, he went on quite easy and forgetful.

The devil of it was, it was so hard to keep up his interest in women nowadays. He didn't care about them any more. A Pussum was all right in her way, but she was an exceptional case, and even she mattered extremely little. No, women, in that sense, were useless to him any more. He felt that his *mind* needed acute stimulation, before he could be physically roused."

D. H. Lawrence, *Women in Love* ("The Industrial Magnate")

ANNEX 7

"You are merely making words," he said; "knowledge means everything to you. Even your animalism, you want it in your head. You don't want to *be* an animal, you want to observe your own animal functions, to get a mental thrill out of them. It is all purely secondary – and more decadent than the most hide-bound intellectualism. What is it but the worst and last form of intellectualism, this love of yours for passion and the animal instincts? Passion and the instincts – you want them hard enough, but through your head, in your consciousness. It all takes place in your head, under that skull of yours. Only you won't be conscious of what *actually* is: you want the lie that will match the rest of your furniture."

/.../

"Spontaneous!" he cried. "You and spontaneity! You, the most deliberate thing that ever walked or crawled! You'd be verily deliberately spontaneous – that's you. – Because you want to have everything in your own volition, your deliberate voluntary consciousness. You want it all in that loathsome little skull of yours, that ought to be cracked like a nut. For you'll be the same till it *is* cracked, like an insect in its skin. If one cracked your skull perhaps one might get a spontaneous, passionate woman out of you, with real sensuality. As it is, what you want is pornography – looking at yourself in mirrors, watching your naked animal actions in mirrors, so that you can have it all in your consciousness, make it all mental."

/.../

"But do you really *want* sensuality?" she [Hermione] asked, puzzled.

Birkin looked at her, and became intent in his explanation.

"Yes," he said, "that and nothing else, at this point. It is a fulfillment – the great dark knowledge you can't have in your head – the dark involuntary being. It is death to one self – but it is the coming into being of another."

"But how? How can you have knowledge not in your head?" she asked, quite unable to interpret his phrases.

"In the blood," he answered; "when the mind and the known world is drowned in darkness – everything must go – there must be the deluge. Then you find yourself a palpable body of darkness, a demon –"

D. H. Lawrence, *Women in Love* ("Class-Room")

ANNEX 8

"When she had seen him, she knew. She knew there was something fatal in the situation, and she must accept it. Yet she must challenge him.

"How did you come up?" she asked.

"I walked up the stairs – the door was open."

She looked at him.

"I haven't closed this door, either," he said. She walked swiftly across the room, and closed her door, softly, and locked it. Then she came back.

She was wonderful, with startled eyes and flushed cheeks, and her plait of hair rather short and thick down her back, and her long, fine white night-dress falling to her feet.

She saw that his boots were all clayey, even his trousers were plastered with clay. And she wondered if he had made footprints all the way up. He was a very strange figure, standing in her bedroom, near the tossed bed.

"Why have you come?" she asked, almost querulous.

"I wanted to," he replied.

And this she could see from his face. It was fate.

/.../

Quickly he pulled off his jacket, pulled loose his black tie, and was unfastening his studs, which were headed each with a pearl. She listened, watching, hoping no one would hear the starched linen crackle. It seemed to snap like pistol-shots.

He had come for vindication. She let him hold her in his arms, clasp her close against him. He found in her an infinite relief. Into her he poured all his pent-up darkness and corrosive death, and he was whole again. It was wonderful, marvelous, it was a miracle. This was the ever-recurrent miracle of his life, at the knowledge of which he was lost in an ecstasy of relief and wonder. And she, subject, received him as a vessel filled with his bitter potion of death. She had no power at this crisis to resist. The terrible frictional violence of death filled her, and she received it in an ecstasy of subjection, in throes of acute violent sensation.

As he drew nearer to her, he plunged deeper into her enveloping soft warmth, a wonderful creative heat that penetrated his veins and gave him life again. He felt himself dissolving and sinking to rest in the bath of her living strength. It seemed as if her heart in her breast were a second unconquerable sun, into the glow and creative strength of which he plunged further and further. All his veins, that were murdered and lacerated, healed softly as life came pulsing in, stealing invisibly in to him as if it were the all-powerful effluence of the sun. His blood, which seemed to have been

drawn back into death, came ebbing on the return, surely, beautifully, powerfully.

He felt his limbs growing fuller and flexible with life, his body gained an unknown strength. He was a man again, strong and rounded. And he was a child, so soothed and restored and full of gratitude.

And she, she was the great bath of life, he worshipped her. Mother and substance of all life she was. And he, child and man, received of her and was made whole. His pure body was almost killed. But the miraculous, soft effluence of her breast suffused over him, over his seared, damaged brain, like a healing lymph, like a soft, soothing flow of life itself, perfect as if he were bathed in the womb again.

His brain was hurt, seared, the tissue was as if destroyed. He had not known how hurt he was, how his tissue, the very tissue of his brain was damaged by the corrosive flood of death. Now, as the healing lymph of her effluence flowed through him, he knew how destroyed he was, like a plant whose tissue is burst from inwards by a frost.

He buried his small, hard head between her breasts, and pressed her breasts against him with his hands. And she with quivering hands pressed his head against her, as he lay suffused out, and she lay fully conscious. The lovely creative warmth flooded through him like a sleep of fecundity within the womb. Ah, if only she would grant him the flow of this living effluence, he would be restored, he would be complete again. He was afraid she would deny him before it was finished. Like a child at the breast, he cleaved intensely to her, and she could not put him away. He was infinitely grateful, as to God, or as an infant is at his mother's breast. He was glad and grateful like a delirium, as he felt his own wholeness come over him again, as he felt the full, unutterable sleep coming over him, the sleep of complete exhaustion and restoration.

But Gudrun lay wide awake, destroyed into perfect consciousness. She lay motionless, with wide eyes staring motionless into the darkness, whilst he was sunk away in sleep, his arms round her.

She seemed to be hearing waves break on a hidden shore, long, slow, gloomy waves, breaking with the rhythm of fate, so monotonously that it seemed eternal. This endless breaking of slow, sullen waves of fate held her like a possession, whilst she lay with dark, wide eyes looking into the darkness. She could see so far, as far as eternity – yet she saw nothing. She was suspended in perfect consciousness – and of what was she conscious?

/.../

They would never be together. Ah, this awful, inhuman distance which will always be interposed between her and the other being!

There was nothing to do but lie still and endure. She felt an overwhelming tenderness for him, and a dark, understirring of jealous

hatred, that he should lie so perfect and immune in another world, whilst she was tormented with violent wakefulness, cast out in the outer darkness.

/.../

The last hour was the longest. And yet, at last it passed. Her heart leapt with relief – yes, there was the slow, strong stroke of the church clock – at last, after this night of eternity. She waited to catch each slow, fatal reverberation. “Three – four – five!” There, it was finished. A weight rolled off her.

She raised herself, leaned over him tenderly, and kissed him. She was sad to wake him. After a few minutes, she kissed him again. But he did not stir. The darling, he was so deep in sleep! What a shame to take him out of it. She let him lie a little longer. But he must go – he must really go.

With full over-tenderness she took his face between her hands, and kissed his eyes. The eyes opened, he remained motionless, looking at her. Her heart stood still. To hide her face from his dreadful opened eyes, in the darkness, she bent down and kissed him, whispering:

“You must go, my love.”

But she was sick with terror, sick.

He put his arms round her. Her heart sank.

“But you must go, my love. It’s late.”

“What time is it?” he said.

Strange, his man’s voice. She quivered. It was an intolerable oppression to her.

“Past five o’clock,” she said.

But he only closed his arms round her again. Her heart cried within her in torture. She disengaged herself firmly.

“You really must go,” she said.

“Not for a minute,” he said.

She lay still, nestling against him, but unyielding.

“Not for a minute,” he repeated, clasping her closely.

“Yes,” she said, unyielding. “I’m afraid if you stay any longer.”

There was a certain coldness in her voice that made him release her, and she broke away, rose and lit the candle. That then was the end.”

D. H. Lawrence, *Women in Love* (“Death and Love”)

ANNEX 9

"Beauty's attractive, and we don't want people to be attracted by old things. We want them to like the new ones."

"But the new ones are so stupid and horrible. Those plays, where there's nothing but helicopters flying about and you *feel* the people kissing." He made a grimace. "Goats and monkeys!" Only in *Othello's* word could he find an adequate vehicle for his contempt and hatred.

"Nice tame animals, anyhow," the Controller murmured paranthetically.

"Why don't you let them see *Othello* instead?"

"I've told you; it's old. Besides, they couldn't understand it."

Yes, that was true. He remembered how Helmholtz had laughed at *Romeo and Juliet*. "Well then," he said, after a pause, "something new that's like *Othello*, and that they could understand."

"That's what we've all been wanting to write," said Helmholtz, breaking a long silence.

"And it's what you never will write," said the Controller. "Because, if it were really like *Othello* nobody could understand it, however new it might be. And if it were new, it couldn't possibly be like *Othello*."

"Why not?"

/.../

"Because our world is not the same as *Othello's* world. You can't make flivvers without steel – and you can't make tragedies without social instability. The world's stable now. People are happy; they get what they want, and they never want what they can't get. They're well off; they're safe; they're never ill; they're not afraid of death; they're blissfully ignorant of passion and old age; they're plagued with no mothers or fathers; they've got no wives, or children, or lovers to feel strongly about; they're so conditioned that they practically can't help behaving as they ought to behave. And if anything should go wrong, there's *soma*. Which you go and chuck out of the window in the name of liberty, Mr. Savage. *Liberty!*" He laughed. "Expecting Deltas to know what liberty is! And now expecting them to understand *Othello*! My good boy!"

Aldous Huxley, *Brave New World* (Chapter Sixteen)

"You've never read this, for example."

The Savage took it. "*The Holy Bible, containing the Old and New Testaments*," he read aloud from the title-page.

"Nor this." It was a small book and had lost its cover.

"*The Imitation of Christ*."

"Nor this." He handed out another volume.

"*The Varieties of Religious Experience*. By William James."

"And I've got plenty more," Mustapha Mond continued, resuming his seat. "A whole collection of pornographic old books. God in the safe and Ford on the shelves." He pointed with a laugh to his avowed library – to the shelves of books, the rack full of reading-machine bobbins and sound-track rolls.

"But if you know about God, why don't you tell them?" asked the Savage indignantly. "Why don't you give them these books about God?"

"For the same reason as we don't give them *Othello*: they're old; they're about God hundreds of years ago. Not about God now."

"But God doesn't change."

"Men do, though."

/.../

"Quite apart from God – though of course God would be a reason for it. Isn't there something in living dangerously?"

"There's a great deal in it," the Controller replied. "Men and women must have their adrenals stimulated from time to time."

"What?" questioned the Savage, uncomprehending.

"It's one of the conditions of perfect health. That's why we've made the V.P.S. treatments compulsory."

"V.P.S.?"

"Violent Passion Surrogate. Regularly once a month. We flood the whole system with adrenin. It's the complete physiological equivalent of fear and rage. All the tonic effects of murdering Desdemona and being murdered by Othello, without any of the inconveniences."

"But I like the inconveniences."

"We don't," said the Controller. "We prefer to do things comfortably."

"But I don't want comfort. I want God, I want poetry, I want real danger, I want freedom, I want goodness, I want sin."

"In fact," said Mustapha Mond, "you're claiming the right to be unhappy."

"All right then," said the Savage defiantly, "I'm claiming the right to be unhappy."

"Not to mention the right to grow old and ugly and impotent; the right to have syphilis and cancer; the right to have too little to eat; the right to be lousy; the right to live in constant apprehension of what may happen tomorrow; the right to catch typhoid; the right to be tortured by unspeakable pains of every kind." There was a long silence.

"I claim them all," said the Savage at last.

Mustapha Mond shrugged his shoulders. "You're welcome," he said."

Aldous Huxley, *Brave New World* (Chapter Seventeen)

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Plate 1.

Tiger! Tiger! Burning bright
In the forests of the night,
What immortal hand or eye
Could frame thy fearful symmetry?

The Tiger

By William Blake

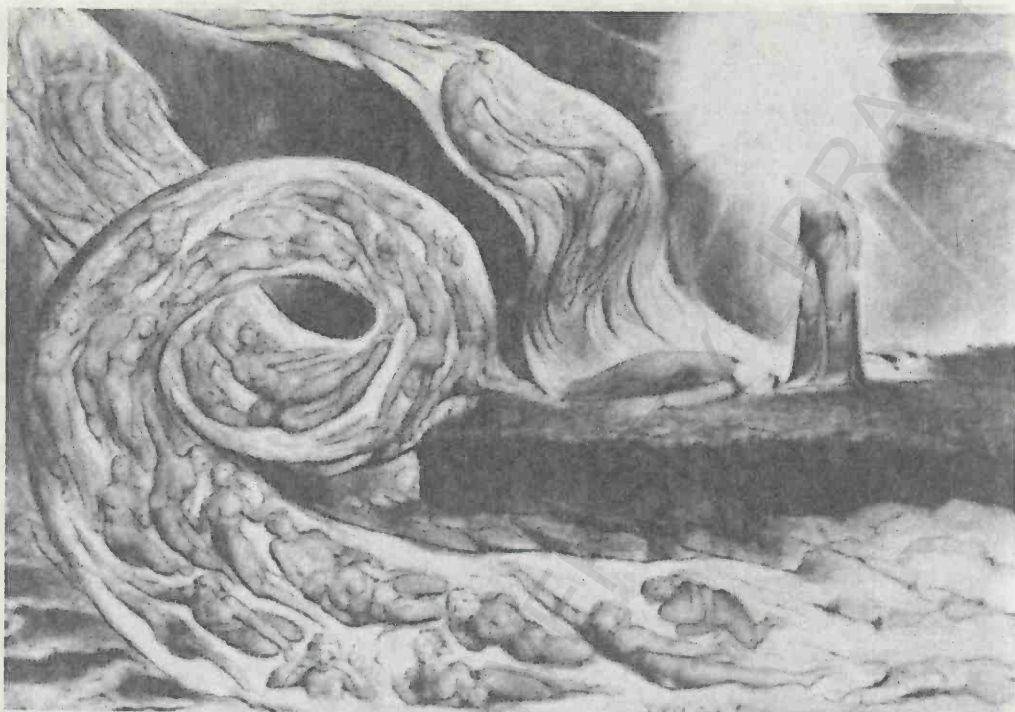


Plate 2: Whirlwind of Lovers (Illustration to Dante's *Inferno*)
By William Blake

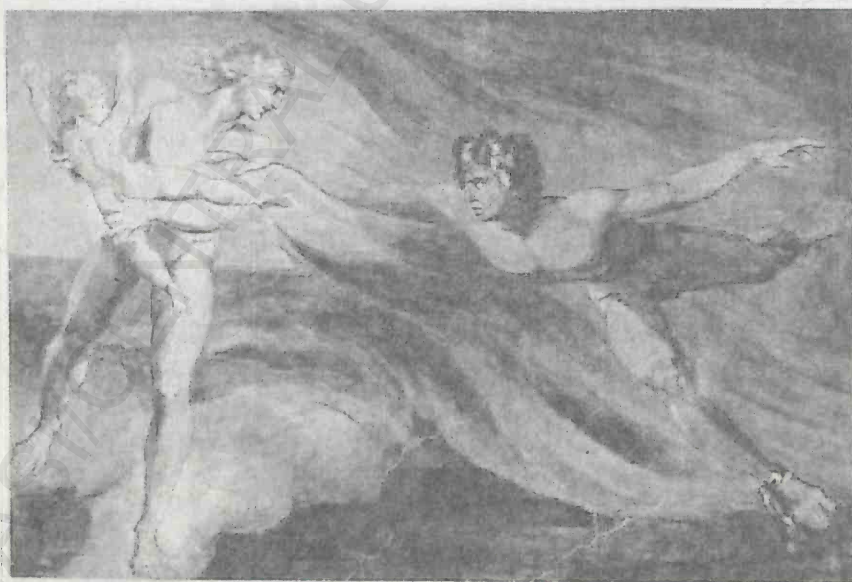


Plate 3: The Good and Evil Angels Struggling for Possession of a Child
Pen and Watercolour on Paper
(Painted some time between 1790 and 1793)
By William Blake



Plate 4
Glad Day
By William Blake

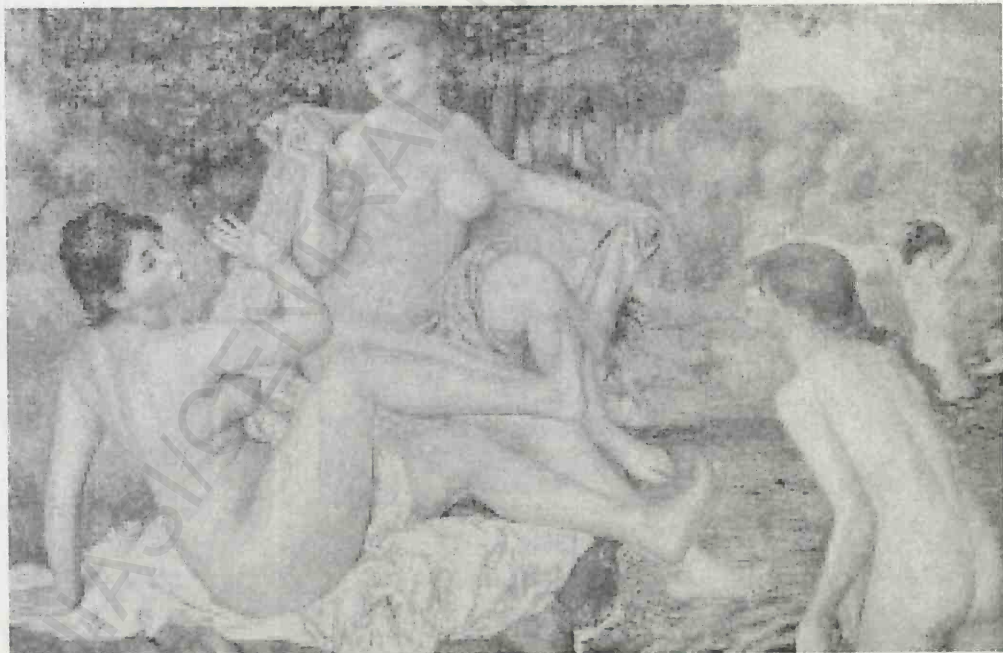


Plate 5
The Bathers
By Pierre Auguste Renoir



Plate 6
His Mother, Aline Charigot; Nudes; And Landscape
By Pierre Auguste Renoir



Plate 7
Mandala



Plate 8
Mandala of the Seasons
By artist Pei-Yee Woo

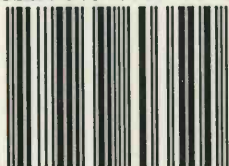
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